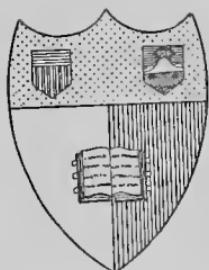


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OF ·THE ·SHADOW



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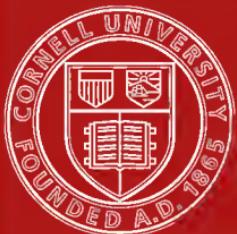
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# THE YEARS OF THE SHADOW

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

THE MIDDLE YEARS. Reminiscences.

'In this comely volume, covering the years from 1891-1911, Mrs. Hinkson continues the story of her literary life, a story begun in a previous book, *Twenty-Five Years*. A sequel is always a dangerous experiment, but in this case the experiment is abundantly justified. The new reminiscences are told with a greater zest, a richer humour, a more potent charm. The result is a most enjoyable and thoroughly companionable book, a revelation, not merely of a very engaging personality, but of the artistic temperament at its sanest and sunniest.'

*Westminster Gazette.*

# THE YEARS OF THE SHADOW

BY

KATHARINE TYNAN *Hinkson*

AUTHOR OF 'TWENTY-FIVE YEARS,' 'THE MIDDLE YEARS,' ETC.

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# THE YEARS OF THE SHADOW

## CHAPTER I

### WHAT WE CAME BACK TO

We came back to a changed Ireland. We had left it—that part of it with which we were best acquainted—in the passion and stress of Parnellism and Anti-Parnellism. A good deal of water had flowed under the bridges since then, and as far as politics were concerned—surface politics, at all events—we found people tepidly liking and tepidly disliking Home Rule, in which I think no one believed. By the way, what a dull name! The thing deserved to be scrapped for its name alone.

Also, superficially perhaps, the giving and entertaining Ireland we remembered had ceased to be. Perhaps it was there all the time though we did not know it. Perhaps it was only that we returned to the Anglo-Irish having gone away from the Celts, and the Anglo-Irish of the suburbs, who are very often remarkably like the same class in England. They were very kind and friendly, but tea-giving was the order of the day, not lunch-giving, nor dinner-giving on a lavish scale as we remembered it. Dublin priests had ceased to entertain the laity to any great extent, very much against the grain, I am sure, for Hospitality when she is hunted will find her last refuge and sanctuary under the roof of an Irish priest's house.

We found all our new friends selling something. It might be pedigree fowls, or it might be dogs, or perhaps carnation-slips. Anyhow, we marvelled at the new spirit of commercialism; and wondered uneasily if Ireland was going to learn the virtue she had always abhorred, the mean virtue, which may easily become a

vice—Thrift. Even the children were selling something. But, after all, perhaps it was only the change from the Celt to the Anglo-Irish. In the old days I had not studied the columns of the *Irish Times* through which the exchange and barter is carried on. Perhaps the Anglo-Irish were always selling something, only I did not know it.

Sometimes the readjusting of things was difficult. A lady came to see me one day with a little fox terrier in her motor. I discovered the dog when she was going away, and made friends with him. She looked at me speculatively. ‘I am so unhappy about him,’ she said. ‘Do you know a good home for him? I am going into a flat in Dublin—no place for a dog—and he has been *so* accustomed to a free life.’

I looked at the dog. It is not in me to refuse a home to a dog. I had three already who were not at all likely to take kindly to a grown-up addition to the family, and there were other factors to be reckoned with. I, myself, did not want another dog, but I threw prudence to the winds. ‘Oh, if you want a home for him,’ I said, ‘I ’ll take him.’ I saw uneasiness in her eye. Before she could mention the price I changed the subject. She went off hurriedly, which was a relief. I wanted to avoid, to overlook the dog, and he was very persistent in claiming my attention. After that experience I was more careful.

Perhaps the commercial instinct was something superimposed, and not entirely germane even to the Anglo-Irish. After all, let me confess that if Thrift enters the soul of the Celt he becomes a thousand times harder and more close-fisted than the Anglo-Irish. Perhaps the traffic in things, usually on an infinitesimal scale, conducted by the Anglo-Irish woman, is really a substitute for the card-playing and race-going of her Celtic sister. There is perhaps a tingle of excitement even in selling carnation-slips at twelve for sixpence. The lives of women before the war, between the aristocracy and the workers, were desperately dull.

The commercial instinct was certainly only skin-deep in the case of our neighbour who bred and sold Poms, and obtained very high prices for them. I think she hoped for a time that we would be among her customers; but, since we did not buy a puppy, she very sweetly presented the youngest of us with one, who is the joy of the house, despite his being a German. A Scottish lady, another neighbour, was very much astonished that any one who could command a large price for a puppy should bestow it as a gift.

‘Is that one of Mrs. M——’s puppies?’

‘Yes.’

‘How much did you pay for him?’

‘She gave him to us.’

The lady turned her eyes wildly to every part of the horizon and up to heaven, repeating in ascending tones of amazement:

‘*Gave! Gave!! Gave!!! Did you say Gave?*’

It was not the first nor the last time I realised the truth of the saying, ‘All things come to him who only knows how to wait.’ I shall give another instance, for which I must go back to years and days long anterior to the Years of the Shadow.

It was in the early years of my marriage, and I was a member of the (London) Irish Literary Society. I had joined it in the irresponsible time of my girlhood, when a subscription to a society counted for nothing. Later the responsible time came, and there were more uses for guineas than paying them as subscriptions to societies I could not attend and clubs I could not use. I ought to have resigned, of course. For some reason I did not. My subscription got into arrears. Applications increased in urgency and even became threatening. There was a delightful but alarming afternoon when Mr. A. P. Graves had a party at the Society’s rooms to meet the most beautiful and saintly of old poets, Aubrey de Vere. I talked to the poet, my short-sighted eyes roving anxiously about in search of my own name on the walls, posted as a defaulter. That had been the last threat. I did not

find it, if it was there, and the party was a very pleasant one.

Afterwards the society changed its tactics, and all the influential members appealed to me in turn not to leave them, advancing various arguments, on patriotic, literary, friendly and other grounds. Finally, as I remained obdurate, the secretary wrote that since they could not afford to lose me I had been unanimously adopted as an Honorary Vice-President.

Our first house after our return to Ireland was a temporary one in Sorrento Terrace, Dalkey, which sits on its rocks over Killiney Bay with a truly Italian effect, gazing away over the most beautiful of bays held within a half-moon of hills, beyond them the mountains. Sorrento Terrace is one end of the crescent, Bray Head the other, and, dimly jutting out beyond Bray Head, one perceives the grey shape of Wicklow Head. All day long, or it seems so to me, the seaward side of the Terrace houses was flooded with sunshine, although it was winter. You descended by terraces and balconies to the garden, and then through a tunnel, and by way of steps to the sea. Each house of the terrace had its private bathing-place, a tank of stone, which the sea emptied and filled with the tides. There was plenty of deep water round about —how deep I did not know, fortunately for myself when, from the drawing-room windows, with green outside shutters to add to the Italian air, I watched placidly my offspring disporting themselves on the slimy rocks jutting out into the deep water. It was an enchanting place for children. There was a tunnel, which was supposed to run right under Dalkey Hill, and there was a real hermit in a cave. Also there was a seal, a friendly beast who used to bob up among the bathers all along the coast.

From the end of the Terrace the road climbs steeply, running along the base of Killiney Hill till it forks and one road runs up over the hill and the other drops down to the sea's edge and the railway station.

That is a beauty which never staled, never need stale during a lifetime ; but I had come back to it with fresh

eyes. Killiney Bay was never the same for long. It was as blue as Reckitt's Blue, or it was a wide stretch of dancing coruscations of diamond light. There were little sandy bays where the sea lapped in with baby talk, murmuring at your feet. There were sun-baked sandy cliffs where you lay in a December sun and revelled in the gentle warmth. All the cliffs were alive with larks and sand-martins and chaffinches and thrushes and black-birds—the colour of the cliffs and the hill ran the whole gamut of orange and bronze, and burnished greens, 'green as a drake's poll,' and all the purples. Around the bay there were mountains beyond mountains in all the silvers and pearls and delicate golds. At night Bray, under the Head, was like a great swarm of fireflies. Always in the day-time five fingers of light came from a cloud and hung over sea and land, as though in blessing. At night the path of the moon on the waters was a broad highway of silver, quicksilver, since it was so broken and dancing.

I said to some one one day, 'Will it always be as beautiful?' I was almost afraid lest I should grow stale to it, and she said, 'It is always just as beautiful to me.'

We used to climb Killiney Hill to the Obelisk and the Druid's Chair, and gaze over the quiet hinterland between us and the mountains on one hand, and the glorious sea and mountain views on the other. We were there from December to May, so I suppose there must have been winter days, but I cannot remember any, but always the sea-birds screaming and turning in the sun, and the broken gold and silver, and the soft song of the sea.

As yet it was hardly known that we had returned. We had not begun to make new friends. Old friends came to see us—Robert Yelverton Tyrrell and his family very often; once or twice Lady Lyttelton, from the Royal Hospital; Lady Gilbert, and sometimes Murrough O'Brien from Mount Eagle, on the side of Killiney Hill. Murrough O'Brien was one of those delightful, high-

minded Quixotic persons whom one often comes upon in Ireland, at least, oftener there than anywhere else. He was of the Munster O'Briens, the Dalcassians, of the branch which became Earls of Inchiquin. He was descended from Murrough of the Burnings, and, of course, he would have had the Norman blood. It showed in his aquiline features and dominant look.

He had been a Land Commissioner, and had ceased to be one because of some Quixotism in which he took the side of the people and pitched officialdom to the devil. He was a Socialist, much as Auberon Herbert used to be in latter Victorian England. He knew the plain people, and was much loved and respected by them. Between him and them there was no barrier of creed or class. He was, one might almost say, impossibly high-minded and fanatically honourable. He knew everybody, and his visitors' list included virtually the whole very much classified district. I am sure he had the ancient pride of his race, but I don't think he saw any reason why there should be classifications.

He was very much interested in our boys, and very anxious that they should attend the National School instead of going to an English public school. English public schools were out of date, he said ; and the National School gave a much better education. Besides, think of the glorious community of man in the making at the National School ! which is the equivalent of the English Board School.

His sister, who was present at one of these discussions, whispered to me : ' Ask him where he sent his own son.'

He looked nonplussed for a second when I asked him the question. Then he laughed.

' My wife *would* have it,' he said, ' very much against my will : he went to Eton.'

He had given his son the name of Foghan, *i.e.* Eugene or Owen. One wonders what Eton *made* of it.

We had not begun to pick up the threads. A. E. did not come to Sorrento, nor the Sigersons that I can remember, nor many of the old friends. I cannot even

recall Father Russell, though he may have come. The rector of the parish called, found the Catholic curate in the drawing-room, and came no more. The parish church—Protestant—was, as Father Healy put it, built on a blasted rock. It was, literally.

The unrest we had foreseen in England had begun. There was a coal strike that spring. People with a stake in the country, even a beefsteak, had begun to curse Jim Larkin. The workers had begun to bless him. We heard of him as a fiery torch, running from place to place, lighting the fires of discontent. He had just taken up the case of the farm labourers of the County Dublin, who had been very well content with the most wretched conditions for themselves and their families. They had, indeed, been very slow to discontent. My father, always regarded as an excellent employer, whose people grew old in his service, paid his men during the Eighties and Nineties, I think, about an average of eleven or twelve shillings a week. He gave a great deal of employment, and his weekly wages bill was high, much higher than the land could repay. He made nothing out of it.

Two or three of his labourers had cottages, and they had very often large families. The cottage—unless it was a new one, such as he had built for his steward—consisted of a kitchen, with an inner room, divided by a partition wall. The clay floor of the old cottage went into puddles when it rained; the fire on the open hearth fed by green sticks smoked acridly. The parents and the children—I remember a family of nine children—slept in the inner room. There the mysteries of Birth and Death were enacted, on so small and wretched a stage, with the children for audience and spectators.

I don't know what they lived on. White bread and tea and potatoes and American bacon, with an occasional dole from the house. The children throve. The parents were attached. They lived and died in the place where we were like one large family. They never thought of hardship or that they might have been better treated.

It was so with skilled labour as well as unskilled.

Wages had not been raised in Dublin for twenty and thirty years, despite the advance in the cost of living. The poverty of Dublin was appalling. The people accepted it as though it were God's will. Strikes were looked at with no favour. These little and partial ones which had taken place in Dublin were regarded as English Trades-Union-made, English Labour 'trying it on the dog.'

Into this peaceful state of things came Larkin running with the flaming torch, scattering fire and smoke as he went. The 'strong' farmers of the County Dublin cursed him. I heard of him soon after my return home from my sister, a farming woman. Presently the farm labourers were 'called out'; and the employers who had been so happy with their people were aghast, wounded, amazed, resentful. The farmers and their wives and daughters, who had lived in easy comfort, had to turn out and fodder and bed the horses and cattle and milk the cows. And they were as grieved and angry as the families of the good landlords when *their* social order came tumbling about their heads.

But the man with the flaming torch ran through the city and over the countryside, scattering his sparks and fire wherever he went, till it seemed as though he would set the whole country alight. Some called him a prophet, some a madman, others a designing demagogue. It was the beginning of the revolution.

## CHAPTER II

### THE NEW HOME

WE had not got over the first keen delight of being back again before we took possession of a house at Shankill, Co. Dublin, and got our ponies and furniture over from England. For more than a year we had been living with other people's furniture, and it was a great delight to come by our own again. We found so many things we had forgotten or lost, and when we began to arrange things, every few seconds there was a shriek of joy, as some long-lost friend was rediscovered.

I have always maintained that it is necessary to move every three or four years in order to find your scissors. The disappearance of pins one can understand. They go to fill all the chinks of the world—but scissors is another matter. I must have acquired and lost some hundreds of scissors since I began my literary career. The last time I moved I looked forward to regaining at least six pairs. We had been eighteen months in the house. I was bitterly disappointed. I did not recover even one: and I have already lost many in this house.

Clarebeg, Shankill, was a square suburban house which had nothing to say for itself except that it had a fine, lofty, well-proportioned room at the back, overlooking the garden, and in the eye of the South. From the bedrooms you could just see the top of the big Sugarloaf, a beautiful purple cone, above the trees. That big room, which we made into a library and work-room, was uncommonly pleasant. The amenities were really amenities. When we came first Clarebeg had been vacant for many years, and the amenities were

buried in prairie grass. But there were indications of a garden and lawns, and there was a walk running round its two acres under and between trees, carpeted that spring with primroses and violets. The road, overhung with trees, ran on till it made a sudden dip between banks covered with coltsfoot, which gave out the delicious smell that has earned it its second name of winter heliotrope, accompanied by a little stream which ran under the leaves and grasses, singing the louder as it came nearer the sea.

The road ended literally in the sea, and had to make a tremendous plunge over a high wall to get there, for coast erosion was always taking place, and the road, which had once sloped to the sea's edge, had been washed away and replaced by a high wall. Being Ireland, no one ever thought of any protection at the foot of that rapid dip, nor any warning notice. Once a motor-car rushed by us in the dark, showing all its lights, and the driver called back to us cheerfully, 'I'm right for Dublin, amn't I?' 'No-o-o,' we bellowed, 'you're going into the sea'; and just caught him in time.

We had a delightful time when the amenities began to reveal themselves. It was like finding dryads and hamadryads in the depths of the 'forest'. Two men, each at the end of a spade, discovered, in some six weeks of time, box-borders, hidden arbours, a sundial, a double hedge with a walk between, a delightful old garden with all manner of fascinating flowers and plants and herbs. We found in a corner the striped York and Lancaster rose. Against the stable wall there grew the largest tree verbena I have ever known. When the Japanese tea-house, quite intact, not even earwiggy, suddenly emerged from the double hedge, it was clothed in the most glorious Dorothy Perkins rambler rose. A little pruning in the wild wood brought to light a delicate arch, also rose-clothed, over the gate through which we had had to wriggle like beasts in the jungle.

Before we had entered into possession of Clarebeg we used to walk over most afternoons from Dalkey, and it

was part of the joy to see what new beauty had come to light. That made the days and the weeks a delightful adventure. It was April weather, and the days had the ascetic beauty of the early spring, before everything bursts to bloom. Then came May, and the fruit trees were all out in blossom, and the garden lay revealed, and the lawns were coming to light. The 'amenities' were certainly charming and very profitable. We had succeeded a famous gardener as tenants, and all she had done seemed to have been preserved for us by the wild growth. We had also had as previous tenant Major Price, that mysterious *bête noire* of the Sinn Feiners, but in 1912 he had not as yet emerged from commonplace officialdom.

We 'moved in' with great joy. We have invariably moved out and moved in as though it were a beginning of the great new days. Almost at the very threshold of the new days something dreadful happened. We had an enchanting Pom puppy, as wise as he was gay, whom we had called Dan, after *Dan Russel the Fox*, which we were reading when he came to us. You remember the poignant chapter about the poisoned hound in that truly delightful book. The name and the association were ominous. Dan had been strangely sleepy while we were getting in. We had missed his wild frolics, but ascribed the sleepiness to the disturbance of mind caused in every dog by any sort of upheaval. The first or second day after we got in Dan went mad with the most terrible suddenness. I was in the room with him. So were some of the furniture removers who very quickly disappeared. He had been looking into the glass door of a bookcase, and at the first agonised howl I thought he had seen a reflection of himself and been frightened. Then he rushed madly at the window, and tore at the wall. I thought a wasp had stung him, although, to be sure, it was too early for wasps. I opened the door and he rushed madly across the passage to the pretty room which I had chosen for my own—and there, after a dreadful three-quarters of an hour, during which he tore and wrestled for escape from Something, howling most

terribly, the sounds died away and when we went in he was dead. We had sent hastily for a vet., but the dog was dead before he arrived. He had died of yew poisoning. His stomach was full of old yew.

It was a long time before we could speak of Dan with composure, and certainly his death and the dreadful manner of it overshadowed our early days at Clarebeg. We had the yew-tree which had poisoned him cut down, and ever since I detest the yew, beloved of Irish ‘layers-out’ of gardens and pleasaunces. The ‘fine Irish yew-hedges,’ of which their owners are so proud, have a graveyard air to me. I am now, for my sins, obliged to live among them, but I look at them with the eyes of an enemy. They are evil.

Now that we were settled in a house of our own, really our own, our friends began to find us out, and we began to make new friends.

The garden had come to life suddenly. What a kind garden ! How different from the walled West-of-Ireland garden of this day, cold as a stone ! The garden at Clarebeg lay open to the sun and the south, with only a low hedge between her and the fields. For all that we were digging her out in May, we ate our green peas and new potatoes before July was over. Our friends were walking between the box-borders at midsummer, under the low apple-boughs prettily trained to form arches, saying, ‘ But what a lovely garden ! ’ I have said there was a sundial, and though the summer of 1912 was a record for rain, the dial numbered a good many golden hours.

One July day Father Matthew Russell, my friend of more than thirty years, came to see us in the new house. He was still editing his *Irish Monthly*, and still interested in all young writers, especially young poets. But he was becoming frailer and frailer. You could see the inner light through the attenuation of his body. There was just a thin sheet of paper between him and Heaven.

We had ordered a conveyance, but he came by an earlier train, arriving with just the same cheerful brisk-

ness I had known in him for all those years. He was greatly pleased with our new abode. He walked about, seeing it all, before he came in and sat on the sofa in the library, talking to the children. ‘Don’t be in any hurry to send Pamela to school, dear,’ he said to me. ‘Why should she go at all? Where would she find such refinement as in her own home?’

He was exceedingly tender with the children, blessing them all, but when we talked of his coming again he said, ‘Oh no. This is my very last visit. I wanted to see how you looked now that you had really come home.’

We walked with him to the station—he still refused to be driven—and at the station dismissed us for our afternoon walk. He had to say his Office, he said. We looked across at him, going up and down the platform, with the open book in his hand—a long, long look, for we thought we might never see him again. We did indeed see him once more, but then he was within a few hours of his death—a saint’s death.

I had had one great pang slipped into the joy of coming home—that my father had not waited for that. There were others to whom my return would have made a great difference, and they had not waited. And now Father Russell was slipping away, and taking a fond picture of us, with our children, once more at home, with him to Heaven.

The last time we were to see him, some six weeks from that July visit, he called us his ‘good boy’ and his ‘good girl’—in our mature age. We said we would see him again, knowing only too well that we should not—in this world. ‘No, no, my good boy and good girl, you are not to come any more. This is the very last time.’ Then, out of the shadows fast closing about him, he spoke of some one who had hurt both him and me. ‘The poor fellow, he didn’t mean it. You must forgive him, my good child! ’

That was the very last of many visits to him. He survived his brother, the Lord Chief-Justice, by just twelve years.

One of these days we went to tea at the Royal Hospital, where Sir Neville Lyttelton was still in residence as Commander of the Forces in Ireland, and we discussed literature and the volume of poems by 'Lucy Lyttelton' which was in preparation, and various people and books and pictures, of whom and which we had common knowledge. Later, Lady Lyttelton accompanied us to a debate at a Hostel for girl-students of the National University run by Dominican nuns. A paper was read on Coventry Patmore, and we were hugely amused by the young author's remarks on Patmore's theories concerning love, and the remarks of the young ladies who followed. My husband said afterwards to a cheerful little nun, 'How much your girls know about love!' 'Ah, sure, they don't,' she said, 'they only think they do.' Some of their remarks uttered in absolute innocence were certainly rather startling.

It was my first, but not my last visit to that Hostel and its Debating Society, where I read two or three papers myself later on, and was received with great cordiality. On one of these occasions—it must have been that first one—Father George O'Neill, a Jesuit professor, told me this story of Father Gerard Hopkins, S.J.—whom I had met with Father Russell in the days of my youth and had corresponded with, as I have told in *Twenty-five Years*—and Coventry Patmore.

Patmore had submitted to the other poet a chapter of his *Sponsa Dei*, the prose companion volume to *The Unknown Eros*. Father Hopkins, thinking it only a fragment, advised Patmore to burn it—by letter. Patmore wrote back saying he had taken Father Hopkins's advice and burnt the volume. It was only then that Father Hopkins realised that he had counselled an *auto da fé* of a complete book, and had been obeyed.

Before the Lytteltons left the Royal Hospital, in the April of that year, 1912, I met at lunch there my old friend, Willie Yeats, whom I had not seen for a long time, although we had kept up an intermittent correspondence. When I arrived I was shown into the drawing-room

where the poet and Lady Gregory were arranging their programme for the Abbey Theatre season. I don't think either was aware of me ; I knew the poet's bad sight prevented his recognising me, and presently Miss Hermione Lyttelton came and took me away. I sat by Willie at lunch and found him just the same ; to me always the simple and gentle and generous Willie of old. But it was a jerky meal. Willie was always rushing to the telephone. Afterwards in the drawing-room, after a little conversation, Lady Gregory asked that they might be excused, as though life were not long enough for the affairs of the Abbey Theatre.

We did not again intrude on the business. Lady Lyttelton walked with me to the tram after I had seen the lovely tulip and anemone beds of the garden and carried away a great bunch. We had to wait some little while for the tram, and I remember that she leant against the quay wall and bade me admire the colour and lines of the houses, broken by the Four Courts and an occasional steeple, stretching away to the glorious Custom House. Like most great ladies she was very simple, and she interviewed various ragged pensioners of hers while we waited, interviews which were not without their passages of humour. She talked of Lady Aberdeen and Lady Wemyss, then Lady Elcho. One I knew already, but was to know better and love well ; the other I was yet to know and love, to my great gain. The one she cordially liked and admired. Of the other she said, 'Oh, Lady Elcho is an angel : of all the women I know, an angel.'

## CHAPTER III

### CLAREBEG AND A. E.

ALL that autumn and winter of 1912-13 the road was ‘up.’ It was without exception the darkest road at night I have ever known. When you entered it you just set your teeth and went on, letting your feet feel the road for themselves. There were very deep ditches to either side, and there was water in them a great part of the year. It was no reflection on any one to fall into these ditches on the way home from a public dinner. You commended yourself to Providence and your feet, shut your eyes because it was darker outside than in, and went forward. It said much for your feet that you so seldom fell in the ditch.

The inhabitants of Shankill were determined not to be a township—hence the absence of lights. No doubt, not being a township kept the place ‘select’ and old-fashioned. Still there were occasions on which one would have hailed the vulgarest gas-lamp as a friend. It was no joke to plunge through the pitchy darkness with a straying horse in front of you, as happened to us one dark night—and you not knowing if the horse was going away from you or coming towards you. I have known the flashes of lightning in a violent thunderstorm to be welcomed in a midnight passage down that road.

But in that first winter the road being ‘up’ had an illumination. It consisted of a few smoky oil lamps to show where the deep trench began that left the merest slit of solid road. I forgot to mention that if you held on to the right-hand path from the top of the road, or thought you held on to it, you fell into the ditch, for the path was merely an ‘amenity’ of a rich man’s dwelling, and ended properly at his gate.

The illuminant was there, and also the watchman over the life and safety of those who used the road while it was up ; but the watchman was a deaf mute. The smoky oil-lamps gave very little indication of the trench, and were set at very long intervals. The 'dummy's' warning took the form of a hobble-gobble which frightened more people into the trench than it ever kept out. It was a terrifying thing to knock up against the 'dummy' in the dead waste and middle of the night. The flash of his own lantern on the flat, pale, unsleeping face was enough to make you prefer the trench to the road. He was a good poor fellow, and his solicitude for your safety was great. Once he followed one of us, step by step, down the road, not even hobble-gobbling, at one o'clock in the morning. That one said he had known fear for the first time.

When you were in your house and comfortable, lying awake at night, there was an eerie sense of companionship in that dumb watchfulness outside your gates. We felt that sense of companionship much more a couple of years later, when again there were watchmen in the road, and a watch-fire, because of the railway line being moved inland from the ever-encroaching sea. But that second time there was something much more tangible to fear than the ghostly cart that creaked by about midnight—oddly enough, we never met it in the road—and returned about three o'clock. The ghosts of smugglers dead a century ago, people said ; but other people would have it that it was merely lawless persons carting away the sand from the sea-shore, which was an offence according to law. The second time the terror that fieth by night was the terror, to a few women in a manless house, of a boat that might put in any night at all, and the stealthy movements of men coming up the lonely road. Then it was good to look out at the watch-fire. But all that was yet two years ahead.

Once I asked a Shankill lady who was very much interested in the affairs of the place why a deaf mute was appointed as watchman. She said his mother was

such a good woman and his family most respectable, and besides, he had lost a leg, which had been replaced by a very fine wooden one, paid for by subscription. The respectability was certainly there. The ‘dummy’s’ brother entered our service later as gardener and general man. He was very efficient and thoroughly respectable. He was very proud of being a Protestant, and correspondingly looked down on his Papistical neighbours. When he attended the Sunday Parliament on the railway bridge, very smart, with a flower in his coat and a hat of imitation Panama, he was reduced to silence, since he would only converse with another Protestant, and there was none but the ‘dummy.’ So, while the Papists settled the affairs of the nation, the ‘dummy’ and his brother stood side by side, or reclined, in a superior isolation.

That wet autumn we had some interesting visitors. A. E. came again to my hearth after many years. We had tried to induce him to visit us in London in vain. ‘What can any one want to live in London for?’ he had asked in amazement.

Many things had happened since we had last met, and I had to grow accustomed to the big gentle man, with the mild, wise, contemplative eyes and silky beard, who had taken the place of the slim boy I used to know. I walked down to the sea and back with him, feeling dreadfully shy. I suppose I made him shy too, for he was by no means the intemperate talker I know him to be now, that day. I searched in my mind for things to say—an odd thing to remember, now that I can never hear enough from him or talk enough to him. He, alone, was well worth coming back for.

But stay—surely he came earlier than the autumn. There was a wet summer evening when he and Sir Horace Plunkett dined with us, and our magnificently efficient manservant was in the condition when he was not efficient, and forgot to light lamps, leaving us in the summer dusk without even the consolation of the fire. Sir Horace was not well, and was preoccupied with the necessity of meeting H. G. Wells and Mrs. Wells at the mail-boat;

and dinner was unconscionably late, and the manservant kept one on the jump as to what he would or would not do next. It was perhaps no wonder A. E. was silent. We all felt depressed. It was impossible to cheer Sir Horace ; even my best story fell on deaf ears, usually very receptive to a jest. There was Joseph Campbell, 'the Mountainy Singer,' too. After Sir Horace left there was a good deal of talk, but I do not remember much about it. It had been an anxious evening for a hostess who was not usually troubled about domestic contretemps. And again A. E. was at lunch one day with Sir Horace when we were there, and I can remember his mild beam at me across the table against the background of his own beautiful paintings—to my purblind eyes a soft blur of all the lilacs and violets melting into dove-colour and silver,—which hang round the dining-room at Kilteragh.

Why then should I think that he came first one day in autumn ? It must have been a day in summer when he came with Mrs. Russell and his two boys. But there was an autumn day when we sat in the library at Clarebeg, and he talked wisdom and beauty as he always does.

After he went away I jotted down some of his talk. I wish I had done that oftener, for I have known many great talkers, but I have never had time to keep a diary beyond a mere record of work done and letters written, although a good diary might be one's passport to immortality—a hundred years hence, perhaps.

Here are some of the things he told me :—

Michael Davitt described for him once the lurid sermons he had heard about Hell in the Catholic churches of the West of Ireland—as the priest piled on the horrors, the people groaning and beating their breasts and tossing like trees in a storm. The climax was reached in the case of one sermon when the preacher paused before saying, with terrible impressiveness, 'The Devil is the Landlord of Hell.'

Before the Land League a woman in the County Mayo—the County of the Land League—heard the crying of a

child out on the bog. Going to look for it she found a naked babe, and carried it into her cabin. She put it in her own child's cradle to warm it while she set milk in a saucepan on the fire to feed it. But the milk, as it boiled, turned blue. She threw that away and set on more milk, but when that second boiling came the milk had turned black. A third time she set on milk and the colour of it was red as blood. Then the naked child sat up in the cradle and spoke. And the thing he said was that there were three years coming : during the first year the rain would fall without ceasing ; during the second the famine would be on the people and there would be many deaths ; in the third much blood would flow. While she looked the naked babe was gone, and there was in the cradle only a withered leaf that had been blown in through the door.

The prophesying babe by the way is not uncommon in Ireland. It is usually supposed to be a fairy. Some-time during 1915—in April, I find from my notebook—I was told the following tale by a young Mayo solicitor.

‘A woman at Knock was washing up the cups and saucers and she let fall a cup. A voice behind her said “If you go on like that you ’ll break all the delf.” She looked round and there was no one but her two-months-old child in the cradle. She turned back again and a voice again said “Be more careful or you ’ll break the delf.” And there was the child, sitting up in the cradle, looking at her. She ran to the field for her husband, and the man thought she was mad when he heard her tale, but when he came in he saw the child sitting up in the cradle looking at him like an old man. “Did you speak ? ” he said to the child. And the child answered : “Yes, I told her she ’d break the delf if she didn’t take care.” Some one ran for the priest, and when he came the child spoke again. The priest, knowing the child was a witch, asked it : “Can you tell anything of the future ? ” “I can tell you one thing,” said the child, “the Kaiser will be in London by August.” ’

That would be clearly a case of possession, such as I

have a record of somewhere which tells how two little girls of an African tribe, having been rescued and brought up by nuns as Christians, became possessed by something which spoke the finest Horatian Latin and argued theology with the Bishop, hastily summoned by the good nuns. The inhabitant of the Knock baby's tiny tenement was fortunately not very accurate in his prophecy, but that is neither here nor there, as John O'Leary used to say.

While I am writing this I come on another tale of the kind in the Irish *Daily Independent* of March 20, 1918.

'A strange report comes from a village near Loughrea, that a baby within an hour of its birth spoke in a loud voice, and what it said was that there would be dreadful battles, but the war would end in April without a decisive result. Having spoken, the child died.'

But now to return to our A. E. and his tales.

'A farmer in Mayo once told me that his sheep did not do well on the mountain, because they had been "in the way" of the fairies. When they were moved they began to thrive. Near by that, at A——, they set out to build a post-office, but fortunately the postmaster discovered, in time, that it was "in the way," and had it moved twelve feet. You can see the walls where they were begun and left, if you go there. Round about Nephin' (*i.e.* the big mountain, Croagh Patrick's rival for size and majesty) 'the people see visions of people coming and going.'

'At —— they will not keen their dead. They will go away to a distance before they cry and lament, lest the hounds of Satan should hear them, for the Soul must have three days' start of the hounds, lest they overtake and rend it on the way to Heaven.'

One of those days A. E. said to me : 'Here is a story you may make your own of and do what you like with.'

'There was once a man who had written a very beautiful story about St. George. He would have gone on writing more beautiful stories about saints ; but, unfortunately, some critic discovered that he had a genius for the *macabre*. So he wrote horrible stories

and forgot all about the saints. He died, and his corpse lay on the bed, for the dead do not know for some time that they are dead. And as he lay there, so helpless, he heard, pitter-patter, feet coming along the corridor, feet he knew. They were the feet of one of the devils he had created in his stories, the Crimson Dwarf. Pitter-patter came other feet—the Eye-in-the-Forehead. They were all coming, all the evil creatures of his imagination. Then the Soul hurled itself away from the opening door, and sped through the window and out into the wilderness, the feet following, pitter-patter, little dry, horny feet. And while he paused for breath he heard them ever gaining on him, for he had created them, and now they were tracking him down. He was all but lost when there suddenly appeared before him the figure of St. George, calm and beautiful, in his knight's armour. The Saint held out his hand to the poor cowering Soul, for an image of him too the man had made before he went astray after devils. St. George struck at the demons, and drove them howling into the wilderness. But the poor frightened Soul he led into Heaven.'

Another day A. E. told me this strange story:—

‘ Many years ago I was sitting in my room in a house in Grantham Street, when, suddenly, the walls opened before me and I saw a great mountain of a very peculiar shape. At the time I did not know what mountain it could be, but I knew it later as Ben Bulben in Sligo, which you remember in the story of Dermod and Grania. I sat in a valley below the mountain, and as I gazed about me there appeared the figure of a young man. His countenance was most remarkable. He had brown eyes and hair, and his face was of the Napoleonic type, with broad straight brows, and his expression was determined and persistent. Then he vanished, and there appeared the figure of a woman with a blue cloak over her head, and she carrying a child in her arms, and rays seemed to come from all parts of Ireland, and they rested on the child's head so that he was in the midst of a halo of light. This vision, in its turn, vanished, and there

came a picture of what appeared to be a queen upon her throne, and while I looked the throne fell and she with it. That too vanished, and I saw a man of gigantic stature striding up and down Ireland beating a drum, and as he walked smoke and flames sprang up in his path. Then he too vanished, and I saw nothing but rays coming from every part of Ireland, so that I could not tell whence they came or where they ended. And while I looked the walls closed and I was sitting in my room alone.'

Here is another story: 'There was a churchyard in the north of Ireland much frequented by fairies, and the people were always coming to see the fairies, till it became a nuisance to the rector. One day I happened to go into the church. I sat down and I had a vision. I saw a long procession entering the church, and, leading it, was a very proud bishop, with his head held very high, as though all the world was beneath him. Behind him walked a boy, carrying a lighted candle, and the insolence of his expression was beyond all description. I made a sketch of these two afterward from memory and gave it to the rector, and he stuck it up on the notice board in the churchyard, and after that neither fairies nor curious people came there again.'

## CHAPTER IV

### YOUNG POETS

I ONLY realised when I came back to Ireland how much the young poets and artists contemporary with me had missed those Sundays at Whitehall. At Clarebeg we began to make a new circle, with a difference, for we were no longer young. There came Padraic Colum and his young wife often, and James Stephens and Mrs. Stephens, and Joseph and Nancy Campbell, both poets, and Seumas O'Sullivan now and again, always with his dreamy elusive look, as though he might slip away if you but took your eyes from him.

I remember now that it was under the apple-trees of the Clarebeg garden that A. E. told us about Stephens, of whom we had already heard reports in London. A little later, at A. E.'s picture-show, which used to be a feature of the Dublin autumns before the war, we met him ; and from that time till May of the following year when they went to Paris, we saw a great deal of the Stephenses. He was a most fascinating person, a very simple, humble, gentle genius, though perfectly ready to roar down an opponent in a discussion. In fact, he was an intemperate talker to match A. E., but it was only in the arguments men love that he was ready to roar you down ; with a woman he was extremely gentle.

In the talking Philosopher of the *Crock of Gold* he pokes sly, loving fun at dear A. E., who once said to me regretfully, 'There were three great talkers in Dublin where there are many talkers : Stephens, Stephen M'Kenna, and myself. And now, with Stephens in Paris and Stephen M'Kenna somewhere else, only I am left.'

Our first Christmas at Clarebeg, the Stephenses dined with us. They, unfortunately, on the way from the station, took that delusive right-hand path which led them into the ditch, from which they scrambled out only to be flurried into the trench by the ‘dummy’s’ hobble-gobble. When they arrived they were woeful spectacles, but very hilarious about their misfortunes. They had to be changed, and whatever garments they retained scraped, before we sat down to dinner. But the meal was a very merry one, Stephens delighting the children with his antics when he donned the caps, aprons, etc., from the crackers.

We used to read a good deal of poetry in an indeliberate fashion those evenings, while Mrs. Stephens and the children chattered. He was as much interested as Willie Yeats used to be in poetry, and had the same generosity. Even the verses of the child of twelve interested him. He would have loved ‘The Mach Explosion,’ written by Patrick at the age of seven, but unfortunately the precious MS. book containing that and other treasures had disappeared in one of our many movings. Fortunately I was able to preserve the gem which we used to say fitted Patrick, then Bunny, to succeed Mr. W. Le Queux as a luridly sensational novelist. He had made first a prose version of the tale :

#### ‘THE MACH EXPLOSION

‘Once a lady went to lite a candle. First she got a mach. As she took the box, as she struck the mach it lit in her hand. What was she to do now that hapened the box and all but the poor lady was bernt to Deth and her husband was not looking but he was liting up the fire, so he happened lightly not to see, but wen she was half bernt her husband lookt round and wen he saw she was berning he did not like it a tall and it made him very angry. As he was so angry he put too much coal on and then he set the Chimbley a lite and then he set the hole place on fire and he himself was bernt.

Then there was no one in that house a tall. That's what comes of lousing your temper.'

This dramatic episode he thought worthy of being rendered into verse, and here it is.

### THE MACH EXPLOSION

There was once a lady lighting a candle,  
As she struck the mach  
It went too near her sleeve  
And it began to catch.

As she was on fire  
She tryed to put it out,  
It frytened her very much,  
The mach went fizzing about.

The fire went on  
And got worse and worse,  
She never found the fire had gone  
Till she began to curse.

Wen she was nearly bernt,  
Her husband came and saw  
Her in that dreadful state,  
The first word he said was No more.

Wen she was gone  
He went downstairs  
And put some coal on the fire,  
In his anger he lit a chair.

And also he put too much on  
And set the chimbley a lite,  
Which made him more angry.  
He tryed with all his might

But alas, he could not.  
It set everything on fire.  
Her husband's coat was caught,  
And slowly he said : This I do not admire.

It went on  
 Till the man was bernt,  
 The last word he said was Good-bye,  
 And also, O my !

And all was bernt,  
 The house was gone.  
 When the house was burning  
 The fire brightly shone.

Without them it was sad,  
 It looked funny to see the house gone,  
 It made everybody feel mad,  
 That man's daughter and son.

Everyone was sad,  
 All the children cryed.  
 Without that poor man and woman  
 All the grown-ups sighed.

But, never mind,  
 To Heaven will go their souls.  
 To them God will be kind,  
 Just like little moles.

And He will bless there heart  
 And keep them safe from danger,  
 They will not sleep in a cart  
 Or on a bed.

But no want of sleep  
 In such a beautiful place,  
 Where we all shall meet  
 In that nice Heaven.

God no's were they are,  
 And has kept them safe.  
 He gives them rides on a cat,  
 They will always love Him.

We will all meet together  
 As lite as a feather,  
 All over the ground is hether  
 In God's own land,

I apologise for this excursion into the past, remembering that the verses have given pleasure to many. Stephens would have capered if he had heard them, and though he often capered I don't think he had that special occasion.

I remember him hanging enchanted over the Oxford Book of Poetry, saying that

‘As ye came from the Holy Land  
Of Walsingham’

|

was the finest of all poems.

A very clever woman said to me at that time that Padraic Colum was like a child going into a wood, with very wide eyes expecting to see something, while Stephens was like something skipping out of a wood ready to pop down on a toadstool and talk to you.

He was—is happily—extraordinarily bright and alert. I remember him skipping with joy over the flight of a white golf ball against the background of vivid green in April. ‘Isn’t it like a white bird?’ he said.

Well, well, all the good talk is as yet too new to be ‘prented,’ too new and too personal. He did go to Paris in the May of 1913, and only came back at the beginning of the war. His friends had been opposed to his going, holding that it was the wrong atmosphere for his genius. It has not spoilt him. He remained obdurately miserable while he was there. A friend said of one of his letters, ‘It was just like a dog lifting his head and howling with wretchedness.’ He never took to the Parisian life, and now, happily, he is back in the Irish life which is his natural and proper environment.

A. E. said to me of Stephens’s treatment of the characters in his stories: ‘He is like a puppy playing with puppies. He rolls over and over with them, shaking and worrying, with such wild pleasure as to be of immense value to a devitalised world.’

*The Demi-Gods* I have not read, though it stands on

my bookshelves. Stephens's pitfall would appear to be a tendency to irreverence and mockery. So Paris was the worst of all possible places for him. There was rough, tender reverence in the early poems that shocked the orthodox respectability, and, I think, real faith and religion. The Quarter might easily make him a mocker, and in the *Demi-Gods* there are indications of Paris, I am told. His prose may treat heavenly beings as a puppy plays with puppies ; but his poetry never. Whether he will or will not, it is haunted with the thought of God.

At that picture-show of A. E.'s, besides renewing an old friendship with Mr. Justice and Mrs. Ross, which has continued most happily, I added a new acquaintance—rather two new acquaintances—in Lord Dunsany, and Francis Ledwidge who was going round the pictures very much under the wing of Lord Dunsany. I talked to Francis Ledwidge ; a very pretty woman was saying something to Lord Dunsany about how good it was for people to receive the pagan idea, for all the world as though one were at a picture-show in London, in those days of clichés, the Eighteen-Nineties. Francis Ledwidge was wrapped up in a huge frieze coat. It gave one the impression somehow of covering a multitude of sins. His face, as I remember it, had no likeness to the nimimy-piminy Bunthorne picture of him which appeared in some papers after his death, nor to the private soldier one I have seen in a Christmas number of the *Bookman*. I carried away an impression of a newly washed, red-and-white wholesomeness. One felt he ought to have been very fair if the sun had not ruddied and goldened him. He was so eager, so humble, so reverent to an older writer, that I have always thought of him since as something very winsome. While we talked A. E. stood by and beamed on us through his glasses.

A. E.'s pictures took the colour out of other people's. One came in from the muddied Dublin streets to the wonderful skies and sands and mountains and rivers of Western and North-Western Ireland. If any one else

but A. E. painted those colours people who did not know would say they were impossible. The deep indigo blue of winter skies in the West of Ireland, the pink of sands under evening skies, might be incredible if you did not know them. Light streams from his pictures, so that they kill out any picture hung near them. In a room where they are your eyes turn first to them. You are always conscious of them.

A. E. sells his pictures for a song—an old song : he would like the phrase. He is quite capable of selling a picture literally for an old or a new song. He told me he priced his pictures so that they might not be beyond the reach of a poor man, a clerk or the like, who was minded for an extravagance.

Once he was pleased when I told him that I had made a discovery ; that turf-smoke, rising over a distant village, was exactly verdigris colour. I had been staying in Tyrone with Mr. Justice and Mrs. Ross, and the latter had insisted on my carrying and using a very strong pair of glasses when we made excursions. By their aid I discovered many things ; for instance, that the bogs were not only the colour of autumn bracken, as my blind eyes had supposed, and that discovery of turf-smoke over a distant village as verdigris colour. A. E. said delightedly : ‘ You are quite right : it is exactly the colour ; but no one would dare to paint it so.’ He would.

W. B. Yeats was out of Dublin by that time, but one or another recalled stories of him. This one had seen him call up the spirits by names as magnificent as those which run gloriously in Lord Dunsany’s fantasies. As he went round and round, waving his hands in incantation, he stopped now and again to eat a plum from a dish which stood on a sideboard in the room.

Another recalled how the spell was broken at a séance by the sound of a tea-bell. I can answer for it that the poet was a particular lover of his tea. He had just been inculcating on the circle that the spirits required to be treated with a fine courtesy. At the sound of the bell he raised his hand to his forehead and pushed back a

lock of hair, in a familiar gesture, left the spirits unceremoniously and fled to his tea.

Another had a tale of him and an eccentric young Dublin poet who wrote one small volume of exquisite poetry and a book of prose which was banned by the libraries. The young poet turned up at W. B.'s lodgings.

'I came to see you,' he explained, 'because we are interested in the same subjects. I would like to explain to you my theories on the subject of poetry.'

They talked a while, and he controverted and contradicted all W. B. said. Finally, he took his hat sadly, and said 'I see I had better go. You are, alas, too old for me to make any impression upon you.'

And he went.

One or two events of those days were in the nature of sequels or continuations. In *Twenty-Five Years* I had given some of my correspondence with Lord Lytton (Owen Meredith). Now his son, who shares his gifts and graces, wrote to me, sending me a photograph of his father and renewing that invitation to Knebworth, given nearly thirty years earlier, and made impossible of acceptance by the giver's appointment to the Viceroyalty of India. Now, after all those years, the invitation was renewed by his son.

'I am sending you the Watts portrait which I have inscribed. I hope you will keep it as a reminder that you have promised to visit us at Knebworth. Unfortunately, I cannot have the pleasure of meeting you there for a year, as my house is let till next autumn, but I rely on you to write and propose yourself at any time convenient to yourself after September. If you come to England before then I hope that we may meet in London.'

A. E. had told me some time before about Lord and Lady Lytton whom he had met in the golden days of the Dudley Viceroyalty, when poets and artists were highly esteemed guests at the Viceregal and Chief Secretary's Lodges. He had a great admiration for both. He said

of Lady Lytton that she was more like a flower than any woman he had ever seen.

Here is another odd continuation from *Twenty-Five Years to The Years of the Shadow*. In the former volume I had written of a famous party at the house of (the then) Sir Charles Russell, 86 Harley Street, in May 1889. There met Gladstone, Lord Randolph Churchill, and Mr. Parnell, with all the London notabilities. It was a Feast of Rehabilitation, coming immediately after the exposure of Pigott's forgery in the *Times*. I had written :

' My principal memory is of Mr. Parnell. I would not have approached him, seeing how he was thronged about—he was the man of the hour and the occasion—only Wilfrid Meynell led me up to him. His eye fell upon me, and I am quite sure his face brightened. Was it because I was an obscure little Irish follower of his in the great London crowd ? Was it with some premonition of the passionate loyalty that would have died for him in a day yet to be ? He had been listening to all the sweet adulatory things that were being said to him with a fine, chilly courtesy. His face brightened—I am sure of it—as his gaze found me out hesitating. He took my hand and held it, in a clasp which was not cold.

" "Oh, Mr. Parnell, you don't remember me," I said.  
" You 've seen me in Ireland, but, of course . . ."

" "I remember you perfectly," he said. " I have been reading your poems."

' Now this overwhelmed me, for we had always believed that Mr. Parnell's reading was of the most practical.

' Others besides myself noticed and commented on the warmth of Mr. Parnell's reception of me, and I was congratulated on every hand. I don't think he had cared very much about his rehabilitation. Perhaps I brought him the mountains and the fields of home.'

Well, here is the other side of the story. Some time in the summer of the fatal year 1914 there came to me the two volumes of Mrs. Parnell's book about her husband inscribed : ' To Katharine Tynan, with Compliments, from Katharine Parnell.'

At page 139 of vol. i. occur these passages about the Feast of Rehabilitation :—

'The reception was a time of adulation for him from first to last, I afterwards heard, but when he came home and told me about it he remarked : "It was all very kind, and just as troublesome as usual—or would have been if I had not discovered a brown head with friendly eyes that looked as shy as I felt."

'I said, "Dear me, who was this charming lady ? I should like to know."

'"That is just what she was : a charming little lady, an Irishwoman. It was Katharine Tynan. You read some of her things to me"; and he went on to speak of others he had met at the reception, afterwards reverting to the pleasure he had felt in meeting Katharine Tynan, who, he believed, genuinely felt what "all those others" were saying.

'Presumably "those others" were perfectly sincere in their appreciation ; but Parnell, so English in his own nature, had a constitutional distrust of English people, and, curiously enough, did not understand them well, while the Irish character was an open book to him. At a reception like this where the guests were, of course, mostly English, Parnell would retire behind his coldest, most aloof bulwark of exquisite courtesy, and to use his own simile about Katharine Tynan, "I felt as though a little friendly bird had made a song for me in an unfriendly land." We often afterwards spoke of "the little friendly bird," and should Mrs. Hinkson (Katharine Tynan) ever see this book she will know that "the Chief" appreciated both her loyalty and her song.'

Well, if Mrs. Parnell ever sees this, as I hope she will, let me tell her how grateful I was for that message from 'the Chief,' towards whom my loyalty and devotion are as strong now as they were in the great days of 'the Parnell Split,' that discoverer of loyalties. Why now, in 1918, one hears on every side in Ireland : 'If we only had Parnell now !' And the aspiration is as fervent from the lips of those who were against him and the children

of those who were against him, as from those who gave him passionate fealty, and their children. Time has brought him back to be the incomparable Leader to all sections of Irish Nationalists.

Here is a bit of a letter which is also in a sense a continuation from *Twenty-Five Years*. It is from J. L. Garvin, whom I first met on that shivering Sunday morning of October 1891, when there was death in the air of Dublin, and, after an exhausting night of banshee wind and rain, Ireland lay cold in a stupefaction—the morning of Parnell's funeral. I had written in *Twenty-Five Years* that I believed Garvin's great enthusiasm was for Parnell, no matter what came later. I am sure he will forgive my quoting him.

'What you say moves old chords, but don't forget that the first thing I ever wrote—Heaven forgive me!—was a poem on the death of Gordon; and I only joined Cowen of Newcastle during the Parnell crisis because I was an advanced Imperialist and anti-Gladstonian, as well as an Independent Home Ruler. I still think and always say that Parnell was one of the very greatest of men, and abate not a jot in that respect. But my Irish friends forget that I never saw Ireland till I was over twenty; that I have never spent three months of my life there, and that only one side of my circle touched, it seems, one side of theirs. What a peck of trouble has been caused me by that early intercourse of mine with people most of whom heartily accepted every word of mine with which they agreed, and never heard a syllable of my other doctrines, though I preached them hard! However, I don't regret a bit of it, but remember you always not only with constant kindness but with warm friendship.

'It amuses me to think of the great idea that came to me in Dublin, when I discovered it more than twenty years ago. I thought that no one there had a proper respect for facts, and that everybody simply hated an adverse fact; and I thought and said there was yet no Ireland. And, you remember, I wanted to start an

Irish *Spectator*, which should have opposite articles on the same subjects and under the same titles, carried through parallel columns by the ablest Nationalists and Unionists I could get, to the end of the political matter. Then we were to come to literature, art, music, science, and so for the first time to produce something which every one in Ireland could read and would have to read. When you remember the foresight of that, and how entirely in the spirit of Thomas Davis, as developed and applied to mental and moral problems, don't you think at odd moments that my subsequent politics have been more intelligible than my old friends on that side have ever been willing to admit ? '

Mr. Garvin hits off the Irish way to a nicety. I am just like that myself ; therefore he is dear to me, a man and a brother, as a true blue Parnell man. I am simply deaf and blind to any other aspect of him.

## CHAPTER V

### GOOD STORIES

IN the Dublin of our youth it was the most familiar spectacle to see men button-holing each other in the street and laughing in a way which would amaze the sober-minded Englishman, if it did not scandalise him. In those days a deal of business in Dublin was apparently conducted by story-telling. The Library of the Four Courts was reported to be the best story-telling centre in Dublin, and that is to say in the world, as a certain famous political club was reported to start all the scandals.

When we came back the *abandon* of the old days was not so obvious in public, but in private the story-telling went on just the same. Every one who came to see us told us stories ; and in these Years of the Shadow, which will lie on us for many a year to come, laughter is precious, so I shall devote a chapter to story-telling.

By the way, here is one I heard of Dr. Mahaffy, who in one way or another is often in the good stories. He came back from a first meeting with a newly-crowned head in a discontented mood. ‘ What do you think of the King of — ? ’ ‘ Well, I will tell you. I said to him, “ Would your Majesty like to hear an Irish story ? ” and he replied, “ That depends, Dr. Mahaffy ! ” ’

Well, I hope I shall be able to justify my Irish stories. Some of them were told by B—— in the Valuation Office, who spent years in travelling up and down the wildest parts of Ireland. He told me once of the solitudes : this is not a story, by the way :—

‘ Often in the old days when I travelled by outside car we’d climb up a long hill, and when we began to

descend the other side there 'd be a valley before us, and that ending in another climb over the next hill into another valley, and so on. Well, sometimes as we descended the hill I 'd see a little cabin far down in the valley, and a few acres of land about it : and, as soon as we appeared at the top of the hill, a man would come out of the cabin and stand watching us as we came. He 'd watch us while we passed, and when I looked back as we climbed the hill out of that valley he 'd be still standing there, watching us. I knew when we 'd disappeared he 'd go back into the cabin and he 'd think all that evening and the next day of the man who passed by on the car, who he could be, and what his business : where he came from and where he was going to, and whether he 'd been there before and whether he 'd come again.'

In those days all official and other travelling in the parts of Ireland untapped by the railways was done on an outside car. I 've done it myself—forty miles on an outside car between Gweedore and Letterkenny, and I propose that those who did it habitually were giants. B—— told us that seeing his carman, when tremendous western rain was travelling up from the Atlantic, take off his coat, fold it and put it under him, he asked him why he did that. ‘ Well, you see, your Honour, if I was to wear it I 'd have a wet coat when the shower was over : but by savin' it I 'll have a dry coat to put on me when the rain 's gone by.’

The outside car was the worst possible conveyance for the Irish winter. It was impossible to protect yourself from the tremendous rains, and you sat in a pool of water on the cushions. One of B——'s carmen provided a gridiron so that his fare might sit out of the wet.

One day driving, they came on a group of gipsies by the roadside.

‘ They are something new,’ said B——, ‘ a wild-looking lot.’

‘ Oh, begob,’ said the carman, ‘ your Honour 's right.

That's the quare assortmint, as the devil said of the Tin Commandments.'

B—— stopped at a country hotel for a meal.

'What would your Honour like ?'

'Anything at all. A chop or a steak would do.'

'Is it a chop or a steak ? Glory be to goodness, we haven't had a bit of fresh mate since the butcher died.'

Once it was two cattle-dealers who came into the hotel where he was at breakfast. They had been 'abroad' in the fair since the dark of the morning. The elder one ordered a beefsteak for breakfast, smacking his lips over the order. Presently the beefsteak came, fizzling on its dish. The elder man pulled up his sleeves, took the carving-knife and fork, divided the steak, putting half on to the younger man's plate, and set to at his own portion. Before he could convey the first morsel to his lips, the waiter intervened. 'I beg your pardon, sir : are you forgettin' it's Friday mornin' ?'

Down went the hands heavily. For a second there was a dead silence. Then the elder cattle-dealer spoke quietly, as one who controls himself by a tremendous effort.

'I've been comin' to this house, man and boy, for a matter o' forty year, an' many's the shillin' I gave you, and many's the bit o' money I've left in it. But that's all over and done wid.' Then, his voice rising in bitter indignation, 'Take it away : take it to the devil. Friday, indeed ! Musha, bad luck to you ! May the devil Friday the sowl out o' ye ! Bring six eggs.'

When I hear the County Councils, or even the Dublin Corporation railed upon, I remember B——'s tales of the Grand Juries, and how the distich about the gentleman who 'out of his extreme bounty built a bridge at the expense of the County,' was applicable and applied all over Ireland. My father used to be very eloquent about the good roads made and the good bridges built, 'adjacent,' as the Irish say, to the residences of the Grand Jurors. B——'s reminiscence was :

'The County Surveyor under the Grand Jury in

Co. —— was a great man. His place would be as bare as your head till the day came to pass the accounts of the road-contractors, etc. Then his lawn would be like a yard at the Limerick Junction with cattle, sheep, pigs, ducks, geese, turkeys, and chickens. A man coming in would say : “Would your Honour pass my little account ? ” “ Oh, I don’t see your name down in the mistress’s present-book.” “ Oh yes, your Honour, I brought a little boneen.” “ Well, I don’t see your name here ; but maybe the mistress forgot to enter it. I ’ll pass your account.” ”

B —— added that you could always tell when you were approaching the house of a Grand Juryman by the well-kept roads, etc.

Let me tell the other stories as they occur to me. They were told by various people : an editor, a Capuchin friar, many priests, who are great story-tellers, and another of the officials, who have the best opportunity for odd experiences among the country-people. This latter, watching an Aran Islander sowing his thin crop of oats on the rock just sprinkled over with soil, said to him : ‘ Why don’t you use all the sea-weed and dead fish lying about for that poor land of yours ? It would make the finest of manure.’

The old fellow looked at him with a twinkling eye. ‘ Arrah, cock it up with manure ! ’ he said. ‘ Sure it ’s humblin’ this land wants.’

Here is another story of J. C. S.’s. He arrived one day at a railway station, depending on the train being late, and found it gone. ‘ Surely the train wasn’t up to time ? ’ he said to the porter. ‘ She was, thin,’ said the porter. ‘ She ’s the punctuallest train in Ireland, and—a great inconvanience to the travellin’ public.’

J. C. S. said of his own stony-broke condition : ‘ Sure I ’m always draggin’ the devil be the tail, an’ only a slippery hoult of it at that.’

The time of the big strike J. C. S. stood on the coal quay at Kingstown where the strikers’ children were picking up coal, to watch a fight between two of them

and see fair-play, as he put it. While he looked on, a small boy of about six years old came to him, black as the pit from head to foot. He opened two grimy paws, and in each of them was a ha'penny. 'I wonder whether you 're man enough to toss me for the two o' them,' he said.

Any one who knows the delicious gaiety and courage of the Dublin *gamin* will appreciate this story. Clean or dirty, most often dirty and half-starved, their white skin showing through their rags, their poor little feet frost-bitten in the winter, they are the most delightful creatures possible.

J. C. S. left a hotel at A—— just as a party of stiff tailor-made English ladies arrived. 'I wonder how they 'll get on with Mrs. Reddy,' he said, and chuckled to himself. Three weeks later he came back. 'And how did you like the ladies who came the day I left ?' 'Ladies ! Is it ladies ? Och, them was the quare ladies ! You wouldn't believe the nonsense was in them. They was always wantin' a clane tablecloth an clane sheets to their beds. An' table napkins, no less ! Och, them was the ladies we wor glad to see the last of ! I 'll tell you what, Mr. S. There 's some people in this world that think they can go into a hotel an' make a convaniance of it.'

J. C. S.'s Board had built a harbour on the west coast. After it was finished a letter of complaint came from the parish priest. The harbour was all wrong : it was full of big stones ; the pier was no good, and so on. J. C. S. was sent down to investigate. He wasn't known in those parts as he is in most of the west country. Walking down the street he came upon the parish priest surveying the harbour and the pier with obvious approval. 'This is a nice harbour you have here,' said J. C. S. 'It is so,' said the P. P. 'There isn't a nicer little harbour in Connaught.' 'Then why did you write this ?' producing the letter. The old priest put on his glasses, took the letter, and looked at it. 'Ah, sure,' said he, 'that was only makin' me little case. Sure you didn't

spend all the money that was granted.' 'Oh, I see. What do you want now ?' 'Well, maybe, a bit on to the pier.' 'How much do you want on to it ?' 'Well now, do you see the little ducks disporting themselves in the water ? That one with the green head is a drake. If you 'd just give us the little pier as far as the drake I 'd be satisfied.'

Here is a priest's stories :—

Pius x., receiving Abbot Gasquet, whom he afterwards made a cardinal, said to him :

'I understand, Father Abbot, that you nearly became Archbishop of Westminster.'

'Yes, Holy Father : but the Holy Ghost thought otherwise.'

'Oh no, my son, *not* the Holy Ghost—Propaganda.'

When Lord Killanin contested Galway as a Unionist he was opposed by the priests. His father, Lord Morris of Spiddal, a famous wit, spoke at one of the election meetings. He always spoke with a tremendous brogue, which certainly helped him as a wit and story-teller.

'I hear,' said he, 'that the Bishop and Father Dooley are opposing me son Martin. Well now, I 'll tell ye a little story. Meself and me son Martin went to Rome when our Holy Father, Leo the Thirteenth, was Pope. We went to have what 's called an audience of the Pope. We were in a grand room, with a golden throne in it, and all around the marble walls there were people standing, and meself and me son Martin along with them. Then the Pope came in and he took the golden chair, and he says, 'Is that you, Martin Morris ? Come up here, and sit down beside me.' And me son Martin went and sat on the golden throne beside our Holy Father. I 'd like to know what the Bishop and Father Dooley have to say to that !'

Here is a story of Lord Emly's. He was being driven by a very intoxicated driver. The car lurched from side to side in imminent danger of upsetting. Presently the car-driver tried to light his pipe, but could not manage to put the match to the pipe. He turned round

and said solemnly : ‘ Me Lord, wonderful are the ways of Nature ! ’ ‘ They are ; but why do you think of that now ? ’ ‘ Well, me Lord, ye see this horse—he’s a child o’ Nature, isn’t he ? ’ ‘ Yes, I suppose he is.’ ‘ Well, me Lord, the dumb baste can dhraw you an’ me an’ the car. An’ look at me, that’s a man ! I can’t even dhraw me own ould pipe.’

Father John, Capuchin, now a chaplain in Palestine, was another story-teller. One of his stories was of an old-fashioned priest who had a new curate, with new-fangled ways, which perturbed the old man. There were a few priests to dinner. The P. P. pushed the decanter to the curate. ‘ Mix yourself a glass of grog.’ ‘ No, thank you, I never drink.’ P. P. (suspiciously), ‘ Have a cigar ? ’ ‘ No, thank you, I never smoke.’ P. P. (watchfully), ‘ You ’ll join us in a game of cards ? ’ ‘ No, thank you, I never play cards.’ P. P. (furiously), ‘ Here, let me see your papers. Are you a priest at all ? ’

A priest who had been on the mission in London told me that once on a London bus he heard the conductor say to the driver, ‘ Hey, Bill ! ’ ‘ Wot yer want ? ’ ‘ There ’s a bloomin ’ bloke in there wot ’s sayin ’ the Mass out of a book.’ ‘ Chuck him aht ! ’

Another story was said to have been told by Dr. Croke, the Archbishop of Cashel, who loved a good story. The priests always love a story at the expense of each other or their order. The story was of an old parish priest on whom his curates were always playing tricks. One morning when the three met at the breakfast table one of the curates opened the *Freeman’s Journal*, glanced down the sheet, and then, with an appearance of the greatest amazement, mingled with horror, handed the paper to his fellow-curate. ‘ What is it, boys ? ’ asked the old priest. ‘ Well, it seems incredible, but the paper reports that the Holy Father is going to remove the discipline which prevents priests marrying.’ They waited for an explosion, but the old priest said very slowly, ‘ Musha, the mischief bother him ! Why didn’t he do it fifty years ago ? ’

'What religion is Mrs. So-and-So?' some one was asked. 'I can't rightly remember, but I know it's the same religion as Mrs. Cassidy's cock.' Mrs. Cassidy's cock was a Plymouth Rock.

Another story told humorously by an old Archbishop was of a priest who was supposed to imbibe too freely, who had come on a visit for purposes of observation and reclamation. The good old man was very anxious to do something to help the weak one. One day he thought he detected traces of his having 'exceeded.' He approached the culprit gently. 'Drink is a terrible thing.' 'It is, indeed, your Grace.' 'It is terrible above all for a priest; it gives such a bad example.' 'So it is, your Grace, an awful thing!' 'You never exceed yourself?' 'Is it me? The Lord forbid!' 'And yet people say things,' said the Archbishop sadly. 'People have told me things about you. I'm not saying I believe them all. It's wiser to believe no more than the half of what you hear. Still——' 'I'm just the same myself, your Grace. I don't believe more than half the stories I'm told about you.' 'What could I do,' asked the Archbishop, telling the story, 'but let him down lightly, he having let me down so lightly?'

Two more stories and I am done. The first is about Lord O'Brien of Kilfenora, who was popularly known in Ireland as 'Pether the Packer,' because of his supposed packing of juries in the Land League days. Lord O'Brien was travelling between Bray and Dublin in a non-smoking carriage when another passenger began to smoke. They were alone in the carriage. Lord O'Brien objected. The stranger persisted in smoking. Lord O'Brien, in a towering rage, handed his card to the offender warning him that he would have him prosecuted. They were nearing Dalkey Station. As the train ran into the station the man got up and said, 'Well, since you're so disagreeable, I'd better get into a smoker,' and went off. Lord O'Brien called the guard and indicated the disappearing smoker. 'Go and take that man's name and address,' he said. 'You must prosecute him for smoking

in a non-smoking carriage, and call me as witness.' The guard went off, most unwillingly; the law is always unpopular in Ireland. Just as the train was beginning to move he came back and put his head in at the carriage window. He had a card in his hand. 'Sure I'll prosecute him with the greatest of pleasure,' said he. 'Just look at the little card he gave me. You'd never guess who he is. Why—*Pether the Packer*, th' ould villain !'

Lord Granard was admiring a pen of very fat pigs at a show, while the proud owner stood by and listened to the praise of them. 'Aye, sure,' said he, "'tis thtrue for your Lordship. They're in lovely condition. If we were all as fit to die as them pigs it would be well for us.'

There are plenty more stories where these come from, but enough is as good as a feast.

## CHAPTER VI

MRS. ROWAN HAMILTON

We had not been long at Shankill before we discovered that we had some remarkable neighbours.

One day when I was dressing to go into town a victoria drove up to the door, and out of it was assisted a very old lady. My twelve-year-old daughter entertained her till I could come, and told me afterwards how she had noticed and commented on china and photographs and curios of various kinds in the room. ‘And what is that?’ she had asked, indicating a small black object in a dim corner, which might well escape keen, young vision. It was an ancient child’s chair in oak, carved curiously with a Crucifixion. ‘Bring it out and show it to me, my dear,’ she commanded. ‘I thought it had an interesting look.’

That was the beginning of a very delightful friendship with a wonderful old lady, Mrs. Rowan Hamilton. She was ninety-two then, and age had hardly impaired her keen interest in life and her fine intelligence. To begin a warm friendship at ninety-two is, I think, something few people would be capable of. It was begun, very soon established, and has but grown warmer with the years that have passed since then.

She lived, and lives, at Shanganagh Castle, close by us, which had belonged to Sir George Cockburn, her husband’s grandfather. The family seat of the Rowan Hamiltons is at Killyleagh in Co. Down, and her eldest daughter had married their neighbour at Clandeboye, Lord Dufferin. Sir George Cockburn was a notable person. He it was who was in charge of Napoleon on the fateful voyage to St. Helena—‘our mighty passenger,’

as the captain of the *Northumberland* described him. The great little man must have been satisfied with Sir George Cockburn's treatment of him, for at Shanganagh Castle, among many famous relics, is the gold snuff-box presented to Sir George by his prisoner.

By the way, I never looked at those grey waters from the end of the road without remembering the treasures that lie sunk beneath them. In or about 1820 Sir George Cockburn, who was a great collector, with Lord Cloncurry, followed Lord Elgin's example and went looting precious things in Greece and Rome. Each acquired a shipload, and, by the irony of things, they travelled safely as far as Killiney Bay where they met with a violent storm. Sir George Cockburn got his precious cargo in safely, but Lord Cloncurry's ship was wrecked, and sank, with all her treasures, within a stone's throw of the land. There she lies with her heavy freight of marbles, sunk deep in the sands, I suppose beyond any hope of salvage.

Sir George's 'collection' adorns Shanganagh Castle. There is a whole room lined with cinerary urns from the catacombs, and there is a gallery filled with noble sculpture. The coffin of the Queen of Sheba—so I have heard it called—a huge marble sarcophagus, stands in the hall; where there is also a magnificent Greek head with a curling beard and sightless eyes—Homer perhaps. I am not sure that some of the children of the house are not prouder of the bust of Archibald Hamilton Rowan, the Irish rebel of 1798, which stands in the ballroom, for that is the way of the Anglo-Irish. I have known many a one who anathematises Easter Week, 1916, make it their proudest boast that they had a great-grandfather out in 1798.

Sir George 'collected' thoroughly. Many years ago an ancient cross disappeared mysteriously from an old graveyard in the neighbourhood of Shankill. Perhaps it was no one's business to look for it. Anyhow it remained untracked till a learned antiquary visited Shanganagh Castle, in recent years, and recognised,

among the objects of Sir George's 'collection,' the old cross. Sir George's descendants very readily restored it to its proper place.

He must have been a broad-minded person, for he presented an altarpiece to the Catholic church at Little Bray, of which later the famous wit, Father Healy, was pastor. Father Healy was very often an honoured guest at Shanganagh Castle.

My friendship with Mrs. Rowan Hamilton was of rapid growth. I gave her my newest novel at that date, *Rose of the Garden*, which is perhaps hardly a novel at all, since it is a linking-up of the story of Lady Sarah Lennox, with the thinnest thread of fiction by way of drawing together and filling in. I had drawn copiously and without permission on the *Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox*, edited by Lord Ilchester and his mother, the Dowager Countess ; and to that there is a sequel which I may mention out of its proper place in order of time. I may say that I had many terrors before and about the time of the *Rose*'s appearance lest I should be injunctioned. Whether because the book was too obscure to attract attention, or because of the magnanimity of the noble editors, the *Rose* bloomed undisturbed. She was one of my trilogy of historical novels which were very kindly handled by the reviewers, who, in this case, did not detect my patchwork, but took my invented Journal of Lady Sarah as genuine with the Letters.

Oddly enough, the time came when I had a chance of making reparation for not asking leave, which might well seem unmannerly, but was only because I was so afraid of being refused after I had written the book, and that would have been very awkward. I was so much in love with my subject that I had written the book in a rush which gave no time for asking permission. Some three years after *Rose of the Garden* was published, I was living in an old Mayo house, partly furnished. While we were in the house we came to be well acquainted with the pictures it contained ; and I was interested to find, hanging above a doorway, a framed print of a Mid-

Victorian gentleman in a frock-coat, signed 'Ilchester.' It certainly was a curious little coincidence.

Two years later there was an auction in the house, and I bought the print, with two or three others ; one an unidentified gentleman who serves at present as a bedroom fire-screen, and may be some one very interesting. After I had acquired the print we discussed its value with Lord Killanin, who was spending a week-end with us. He thought it would possibly be of considerable value to the family, and was very much interested in what price I should ask. I wrote to the Dowager Lady Ilchester, who was frankly delighted to hear of my find. The print, which represented her late husband's uncle, was much prized in the family, she wrote, and her copy of it had been burnt in a fire at her country house. If I had been a commercial-minded person her frankness would have given avarice a chance. She asked me what she should send me for it. I, being a Celt, having considered with enjoyment the profit that might be made out of my find, refused to take anything, and sent the print off to her. As she, too, is Irish she probably did not think me as mad as an English person would. To be sure the sum I had paid for it was ridiculous, and I owed reparation. Lady Ilchester has written me some delightful letters, and I write this book with one of the magnificent quills from the Ilchester Swannery at Abbotsbury.

But to return to Mrs. Rowan Hamilton and 'Sally,' as Mr. George Wyndham, her great-grand-nephew, called my heroine. This modern great old lady was very much delighted with the book. She established an immediate 'link with the past' in the friendship of her aunt with Lady Sarah. Somewhere I have a letter detailing the connection, which I have put away so carefully that I cannot find it. It is probably in some book or other. The letters I most cherish I have put into books for some years past. They remain clean and they are safe, even if you do lose them. I am occasionally reproached with this habit by one who keeps all his papers on the floor,

whence they mount like a foamy tide, swirling about the islet of a chair and desk in a room which is safe from the housemaid. I answer that nothing is lost when you know where it is, generally speaking; and when I go hunting in books for the letter I want, if I do not find it I find something else equally precious.

My dear old lady established a connection between her aunt and Lady Sarah in the days when the King of England was ‘Sally’s’ suitor, while she was still Lady Sarah Lennox, not Lady Sarah Bunbury nor Lady Sarah Napier. But that, I think, can hardly have been possible unless it was a great-aunt. The friendship must have been of a later date, for this aunt was the adopted daughter of the Court Physician who committed suicide because the Princess Charlotte died in child-birth when he was in medical charge. Mrs. Rowan Hamilton insists that it was an aunt, not a great-aunt; and she ought to know.

This aunt it must have been who used to quote Lady Harcourt against my old lady and her brother when they were children.

‘ My dear aunt used to say when she thought we were very wild—she was *rather* old-fashioned in her ideas—“ What *would* Lady Harcourt have said if she could have known what the present race of young people are coming to? *How* shocked she would have been! ” And my dear, would you believe it? my brother said one day, “ Oh, *damn* Lady Harcourt! ” My dear, it was as though some one had fired a gun off at my poor, dear aunt’s ear.’

I have many letters from my great old lady, but, since we met constantly during the three years following our first meeting, the letters were not much more than notes. In one of those early letters she mentioned that she had twenty grandchildren and twenty-seven great-grandchildren. There have been additions since then. I have a picture of five generations—my old lady, the Dowager Lady Dufferin, Lady Plunket, Mrs. Rhodes, and the latter’s baby daughter. And, alas! some have been

taken away : five of her grandsons, Archibald Rowan Hamilton, the heir to Killyleagh, Denys Stephenson and his brother, Lord Basil Blackwood, and his elder brother, the Marquess of Dufferin.

She was pretty constantly driving up to my door during those years in her victoria when the days were warm, in her brougham in winter. Nearly all her notes refer to those calls or to some visit of mine to her. Now and again she had a party to meet Lady Dufferin, or her other daughter, Lady Nicolson, now Lady Carnock. She enjoyed her parties, and was almost feverishly anxious that none of her guests should be neglected, so that she was usually very tired after one of these occasions. Often when she drove to my door I used to sit with her in her carriage for a talk, to save her mounting our rather steep steps. She was fond of bringing gifts, a bunch of grapes, strawberries, tomatoes, a brace of grouse from Scotland, snipe from Co. Down : these last when I was not well. And she always carried off some books to read. Our friendship is now six years old, and she has frequently during those six years talked of failing eyesight ; but she still, I believe, reads up to ten o'clock at night.

After Lady Sarah she was greatly interested in another dear and great old lady to whom I was much devoted, Mrs. Blackwell, Lady of the Manor of Chipperfield and King's Langley, Herts. Mrs. Rowan Hamilton had happy associations with Hertfordshire and another Manor House, but that, I think, was somewhere about Tring. I must have lent her a *Cornhill* article on the 'Lady of the Manor,' to which this note refers. It is dated only 'Sunday' : she seldom put a fuller date.

'The *Cornhill* arrived last night, and now I have to thank you for two books, and I want to talk over both with you and ask some questions ; both were of great interest to me. But I am not your bright, fresh, old lady of 80, but actually twelve years more, 92. I feel surprised as I write down these figures, but my great age prevents my doing more in the way of visiting, and excuses my writing letters, especially as we live near. I

hope to see and talk things over with you, and I wonder what day and what hour would suit you? And then weather has to be considered, for you could not walk here in the rain. . . .

'I wonder if your old lady lived at or near Ashridge. I have walked up that hill often when I was about seventy years old. My dear friend who lived close by died about twenty years ago. I have not been in Herts for ten years.'

Now I have found the passage for which I have been looking :—

'I had an old aunt who lived about George the Third's Court, and was present at the game of Hide and Seek with the King and heard her call out, "King, King, here am I!" and many other things in your book she used to talk about.'

During those nearly three years at Shankill we met constantly. The wonderful friendship had no languors or pauses in it. When there were other people present in her drawing-room, I record with pride that I was the favoured one. It was my happy privilege to sit close to her chair within-doors, to occupy the seat with her when she sat down in the beautiful old Italian garden with its clipped yews. I dare say other people were very jealous: I hope they were. As we sat together she told me many things. In those early days she used to go to parties, and sometimes she would drive me, or she wrote: 'I shall call for you at three to-morrow if it is fine, and take you to pay any calls you wish to pay.' Under her wing I returned calls two years overdue, not through any disinclination of mine to pay them, but because I had no carriage to get about. In those cases, I believe, I left cards without risking a chilly reception. Another friend, Lady Harrel, had also offered to drive me to pay calls. She had said, referring to the belated return calls, 'You need not think I am going to drive you up to the doors of those justly affronted people. I shall wait round the corner.' Under the ægis of my dear, great old lady I delivered pasteboards at various houses and fled. She made my excuse for not going in.

About that adjective 'great,' she objected once. 'I

am only great in that I am a great age. My dear, if you could know what a burthen it is !'

Yet she enjoyed her age. One day, that first summer, she was at a garden-party at Lord Powerscourt's. Lord Aberdeen, the then Viceroy, was there, and asked to be introduced to her. The finest of fine gentlemen, he sat and talked with her. She was quite pleased at the little incident. I remember a day, a couple of years later, when I came into the drawing-room of the Viceregal Lodge and said, 'I have been spending the afternoon with a most wonderful old lady of ninety-four.' Lady Aberdeen said, in her quick girlish way : 'It must have been Mrs. Rowan Hamilton; but I can beat you, Mrs. Hinkson, for I have been at tea with an old lady of a hundred,' and so she had.

There were days when my dear old lady was very bright and gay, when it seemed absurd to think of her as approaching her hundredth year, as there were days when she was quiet with the burden of her years. She kept up her interest in the great as in the little world. Of course, with two sons-in-law in the forefront of diplomacy, a daughter who had been Vice-Reine in India and Canada and Madame L'Ambassadrice at Paris and Rome and St. Petersburg and Constantinople, she was very exceptionally in touch with the great world. By the way, there was a little room off the drawing-room at Shanganagh Castle, filled with memorials of one kind or another of the family. There, in the case with Napoleon's snuff-box, were many other wonderful relics of one kind or another. There were the pictures of the children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Among them was Lady Dufferin in the great days of the Indian Viceroyalty, in splendid evening-dress with the blue ribbon of an order across her breast, the tiara of jewels in her hair, looking truly a queen. Nothing could be simpler than the gentle little lady in black whom one used to meet at her mother's parties, ready to talk to all the circle, lively or dull, significant or insignificant. Once she came to see me with her mother, and there

was an occasion on which we travelled to town by the same train, but not together ; I, as became me, waiting to be asked. The old lady said afterwards : ‘ My daughter would have liked to talk to you on the way up to town, but she did not like to offer herself. She is very shy.’

It was strange to think of this lady who had filled so many great positions worthily being shy—in my regard. I have always regretted the opportunity her incredible shyness lost me.

Later, in reading for review her *Russian and Turkish Journals*, it was delightful to come upon the revelations of her gaiety, her girlish fun, which peeped out now and again from these letters, describing great events, written to her mother. Lord Dufferin had the gaiety and quick humour without which greatness is incomplete. It was good to see how in every way this extraordinarily fascinating and lovable man had found the other half of his soul.

Now to my talks with Mrs. Rowan Hamilton. A first reminiscence reminds one of Mr. George Wyndham’s happy marriage. It was a story of a meeting with Lady Grosvenor at a garden-party, when she said, looking about for some one : ‘ Oh, but have you seen my George ? You must see my George.’

Another told how Lord Dufferin, as a boy of sixteen, visited Skibbereen during the Black ’47, and was so shocked by what he saw of the famine victims that he raised £1600 on the property that was to come to him and gave it to be distributed among the starving people.

Another tale was that Nelson left his daughter, Horatia, in trust to the English people, but nothing was done for her. A cousin of Mrs. Rowan Hamilton, a Mr. Gordon, who died leaving a good deal of money, left a charge of 2 per cent. on all he died possessed of to make a provision for Horatia Nelson : a tiny legacy of £50 left to Mrs. Rowan Hamilton being so reduced to £49.

She was greatly pleased when my husband was ap-

pointed a Resident Magistrate, although not at all for herself, she wrote—she was going to miss us dreadfully, which was more than a mere politeness. Claremorris was too far, but Wicklow would be vacant presently, and *when the time came* she would use all the influence the family possessed to bring us there.

I went to see her shortly before we left, and found her, on a sleety January Sunday, seated by a roaring fire, reading *Punch*. We had a quiet talk before other visitors came in, and when I would have gone she held me till she was once more alone, to talk about Mrs. Delany, who was the heroine of my novel, *Molly, My Heart's Delight*. She, as well as Lady Sarah Lennox, had been a friend of Mrs. Rowan Hamilton's aunt, and she and Dean Delany, when he was Dean of Dromore, were frequent visitors at Killyleagh. It was on that day she told me of the 'Oh, damn Lady Harcourt' episode. 'What, indeed,' she said with great liveliness, 'would Lady Harcourt have thought of my great-grandchildren? There are those children at Old Connaught (Lord Plunket's children, and their cousins, Lord Dufferin's children, were together at Old Connaught because of illness in the family of the latter). My great-grandson, Terence Plunket, and his cousin went off to Dublin the other day, quite unchaperoned. They are twelve and fourteen. I asked them what they went to Dublin for. They said to buy animals. I asked what animals? Terence said, "I wanted two ferrets and Patsy wanted a lizard." "Did you get them?" "No, though we went all over Dublin. So, as Patsy could not get a lizard she took a white mouse." "Oh!" I said to Patsy, "and where do you keep the white mouse?" To tell you the truth, my dear, I was afraid she might be carrying it about with her. But she said, "In the spare room.",'

She asked me if I had ever been inside Delville, the Delanys' house at Glasnevin. I said I had not, although the kind occupants of the house had sent me word through Father Russell, when I was writing *Molly*, to

come and see it. She said many of her family were buried in the old churchyard which Mary Delany and her husband used to enter by a postern gate from their enchanting garden.

She talked also of her aunt's friendship with Fanny Burney, and then she went on to discuss Mayo, to which we were going. She was in a very lively mood, and remarked that she had very nearly married the grandfather of the local magnate of our new station, and I said, 'I wonder what he would have been like if you had !' the 'he' being the local magnate.

She held my hands when I stood up to leave, apologising for not sending the carriage with me. 'Those children,' in the delightful emancipation of being hastily rushed off to the freedom of an Irish country house from the danger of infection, had borrowed the carriage. They were all over the place—jumping up on outside cars, driving and walking all over the country, doing just what they liked, with no one to prevent them.

'My dear,' she ended, on a high note of exhilaration, 'what *would* Lady Harcourt have said ?'

## CHAPTER VII

### SIR DAVID AND LADY HARREL

THE very pretty young lady who lived in the old, old little house called Crinken Abbey, at Mrs. Rowan Hamilton's gate, told me that the ghosts of the monks used to tap at the garden door at night, or it *might* be the ghosts of the monks. A bit of the old abbey stands just inside the gates of the main entrance to Shanganagh Castle. The very pretty young lady gave me this bit of lore : 'Mrs. Rowan Hamilton says that her kitchen-garden was once the graveyard of the monks. It grows the best cabbages in the county.'

Other gates besides those of Shanganagh Castle, other hearts besides my old lady's, were opened to us during those happy years at Shankill. Another delightful, fresh, unexpected gift was the friendship with Sir David and Lady Harrel. I cannot imagine what induced Lady Harrel to ask some one to bring about a meeting between us. I am not aware that she was interested particularly in anything I had ever written, which is the usual reason for seeking my acquaintance. She came from a staunch Unionist stock, and I was notoriously Nationalist. It was the happiest of inspirations, and one for which I am deeply grateful. We were in many ways kindred spirits. How fortunate we did not miss each other !

That was one of the friendships one walks into without let or hindrance, but happily, unlike some hastily-formed friendships, it has stood the test of time. The Sunday after that first meeting we walked up to the Harrels' house, just under 'Katty Goligher,' that dearest of mountains, to tea. After we had talked a while Sir

David came into the room. I remembered Sir David as Chief of the Dublin Police in my old rebellious days. What could have seemed more unlikely in those days than that he and I should ever be friends ? There entered the room a very handsome, bearded man of a distinguished presence. He had a rapid dominant glance, and his eyes were as honest as the day. They were and are the eyes of a sailor, clean, fearless, straightforward. You said to yourself that here was a man who was absolutely straight.

‘ Steel-true and blade-straight.’

You had only to look at him to trust him.

That was the beginning of a friendship which my husband and myself have always regarded as a great honour. It was the first Sunday afternoon of many on which we climbed up the hill road to spend the interval between lunch and dinner with these honoured and beloved friends. We always had visitors of our own for the Sunday-evening meal ; and what a scamper home we used to have, for one story led to another at the Harrels’ and we were always going and always turning back to tell or listen to one more story. Usually our visitors’ train got in before we arrived, but we could always count on their being received and entertained by our very sociable family. One evening we walked home behind some people we only knew by correspondence, feeling too shy to accost them. Oh, they were good days ! How little we thought in those good days what was coming !

Sir David in his boyhood had been nominated for the Navy, passed six weeks over age and rejected. Influence with Sir James Graham at the Admiralty—the gentleman who originated the verb to Grahamise—was used. He replied that as the Crimean War was just over, they were retiring on half-pay a number of lieutenants and midshipmen, but a commission in the Army was offered, which young David Harrel refused in favour of his eldest brother. He then entered the Merchant Service as

midshipman in the Dunbar Shipping Co., trading between London, Australia, and New Zealand, and rounding Cape Horn on the voyages. The captain, known to his officers as 'Old Man,' was a Yorkshireman, a frank hater of the Irish. 'Old Man's' salary was £1000 a year and hatch-allowance, *i.e.* permission to barter anything he could carry in a certain defined space round the hatches. The vessels carried first-class passengers between the poop and the mainmast. The officers were in the cuddy, behind ; second-class passengers were under the first-class, and the middies behind them. Thursdays and Sundays were called champagne days, when the middies dined in the cuddies with the officers. At Sydney a carriage and pair awaited the captain, and there was lavish entertainment, dinners, dances, etc., for the officers and midshipmen. On one voyage the boat arrived off Sydney Harbour at five o'clock, one hour before sunset. The orders were that the harbour should not be entered except in broad daylight, as it was a dangerous entrance. 'Old Man' cast anchor outside the harbour, and while the passengers raged and stormed, he walked up and down the deck with the most absolute indifference. During the night a land-wind drove them eighty miles out to sea. It took them two days to get in again, and as they got near the harbour they discovered that the coast was strewn with wreckage, dead bodies of men and animals, portions of ships, etc., floating in the water. Their sister ship, as well as others, had gone a total wreck there three hours previously.

Another time the crew deserted to join the rush to the Bendigo Goldfields. The middies were called on to unload, which they did. When it was done the vessel warped to the opposite quay to take in a cargo consisting of bales of wool, barrels of one thing and another, etc., which the middies were asked to put on board. They made a deputation to wait on 'Old Man' in his cabin to ask for compensation, but when they stood up before him, so great was the awe he inspired that not one of them could speak a word. However, they made their

case at last, and ‘Old Man’ promised to put the matter before the owners, as he had no power to give extra pay. The middies then set to work to load up, worked from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M., washed and changed, and went off to a dance where they danced till 2 A.M.; slept then till 6 A.M. and started loading again. For this emergency work half their premium was remitted in each case, the premiums being £60 for the first year, £40 for the second year, and £30 for the third year. That happened on David Harrel’s third trip. He received rapid promotion, being promoted third officer on this trip. He was offered the position of second officer if he would remain in the Service, but refused, and came back to Ireland and a cadetship in the Constabulary.

‘I’m not sure it wasn’t a mistake,’ he said. ‘“Old Man” died a very rich man.’

While he told it you felt as though you were reading a page of Marryat. Sir David had been District Inspector, Resident Magistrate, Chief Commissioner of Dublin Metropolitan Police, Under-Secretary for Ireland, and the years had not washed the sailor out of him. The grey of the sea was in his eyes, the tan of it on his wholesome skin, the salt of it on his lips.

I am persuaded that he was the ideal Chief Secretary for Ireland. He has the dominant character, the sense of justice, the strong will, the kindness, the real love and understanding of the people. As a Resident Magistrate he went through the wild days of the Land League in Mayo, the county of the Land League. He loved the people and they loved him. ‘A good, wild people,’ he once described them in my hearing. He refused a police escort, and never needed one. In the wildest time, when he was away from home for several days and nights, he left his wife—indomitable as he—and his young children with perfect confidence in a lonely house in the midst of the wilds. Other people would have said he carried his life in his hand. Neither he nor she believed that. Lady Harrel told me that once when his absence was unduly prolonged a man asked

to see her. ‘I owe a trifle of money to his Honour,’ he said (the price of a calf or something of the kind), ‘an’ I thought him bein’ away you might want moneys, so I brought it.’

I remember a story Sir David told me once about a boy he had sent to jail—I forget for what offence. The boy had been in the habit of driving his car. All locomotion pretty well in the West in those days was by outside car. The boy served his sentence and came no more. The first day after he had been released his father came, driving the car. ‘Where is Jamesy?’ asked Sir David. ‘He’s at home, but he’s ashamed to face your Honour.’ ‘Go back and tell him he’s to come.’ The father went and presently came Jamesy, red-faced and uneasy. Sir David got up on his side of the car and talked to him as though nothing had happened. For both of them the whole unhappy business had been wiped out.

A famous West of Ireland priest, Father Denis O’Hara, said to me one day: ‘Ah, he’s a good man, is Sir David. I remember one day when there was a terrible row over some of the Congested Districts Board land, and he and I were in the middle of an excited crowd with black-thorns, and upon my word, our lives didn’t seem worth much. I caught a glimpse of Sir David in the midst of a surging mass of people and police, and there was a little woman in a terrible state of excitement hanging on to his beard, and the police were getting in around him, and he was saying, “Don’t hurt her, men, don’t hurt her,” and trying to release himself with the greatest gentleness you ever saw.’

Sir David used to call those Sunday-afternoon talks ‘mind talks,’ and I believe they were as good to him and Lady Harrel as they were to us. Of course he had known everybody who was anybody in Ireland for forty years back, and a great many in England. We used to listen to his talk without intruding our own. All the history of that time was at his finger-ends. Like some other big men I have known he was extraordinarily

frank. When he trusted he trusted. I remember that he said once of Lady Harrel, 'I am indiscreet sometimes ; she never.' But he had his reservations. Readers of my *Twenty-Five Years* may recall the episode of the Lady in Black. We were talking about it one day, and I said that the Scotland Yard men were very keen to know who she was : I had been told so at the time. He said, 'Oh, indeed ; *we* knew all about her.' But he said no more, and although I was very curious I did not ask him, understanding that it was one of his reservations.

One of those days, in June 1913, I had gone up to Dublin to buy books for the Carnegie Library in Shankill. After a morning spent in the grime of second-hand bookshops on the quays of Dublin, I was in the train going to Harcourt Street Station on my homeward way, hoping that no one I knew would get in as I was in a disgraceful condition, when I heard the newsboys shouting something. I did not pay much heed, but the lady who was with me leant forward and caught sight of a poster. 'Death of an ex-Irish Chief Secretary,' she said. It was George Wyndham's death they were calling. In almost exactly the same circumstances I had heard of Mr. Parnell's death more than a score years earlier. Mr. Wyndham had asked me to visit Clouds, and I had not gone. We had been invited to his son's wedding two months earlier, and we had not gone. I had accepted an invitation from his sister, Lady Glenconner, to visit her at her Wiltshire home a week later than that day, and I had had a hope in my mind of meeting the friend I had never seen, where friendship had never failed us. It was a great grief and shock, and the more poignant because he too, like Parnell, had served Ireland and been flung to the wolves by a certain section of Irishmen. He was buried the day I ought to have arrived at Wilsford Manor.

I have written of Mr. Wyndham elsewhere, so I shall not here. But it made a sad difference to us that he was gone. There was no one to turn to, one said at the time, and one has often said it since, even though there are

others to turn to who have always been ready to listen : our way has been indeed sown thick with good friends.

I have said that still one hails as a friend and a right-minded person the one who was a Parnellite. It is a kind of freemasonry. So one turned to those who admired and loved George Wyndham. So one is unforgiving to his enemies. They are very little in evidence in Ireland. I have never met but one : all other Irish praise him.

One day—it would be the following St. Patrick's Day—we were going to the Trooping of the Colours at Dublin Castle, and travelled up with Sir David. We talked of George Wyndham, whom he greatly liked and admired. He had seen John Morley after the death, and he was deeply distressed by it ; he had recalled the three young men of a dozen years back who were in the very forefront of things : Curzon, Austen Chamberlain, and George Wyndham. He had placed George Wyndham first. It was at his golden moment, when he was Under-Secretary for War. 'I looked to see him directing the destinies of the Empire,' Morley had said.

George Wyndham said once to Sir David that he trusted the House of Commons. His own great plan to satisfy the Irish, which was destined to fail and to drag him down with it, was probably in his mind. 'Make a clean breast of it,' he said, 'and the House will be with you.' 'You trust too much,' said Sir David, and added, telling the story, 'It was his magnanimity destroyed him.'

Sir David had resigned the Under-Secretaryship to Lord MacDonnell, then Sir Anthony. I remember an evening in the early years of the century when I was hostess at a Lyceum Club Irish Dinner, and Lord Killanin took me in. He said, during a talk about Irish matters, 'There's only one power in Ireland and that is Sir Anthony.' Sir David had not been well, and thought the damp mists of the Phoenix Park, where the Under-Secretary's Lodge is, affected his health. He said, 'If I'd known what was going to happen to Wyndham I'd have sacrificed my life to prevent it.' He went on

to tell us of a visit he paid to 35 Park Lane after the débâcle, and the anguish in which he found George Wyndham, and Lady Grosvenor for him. No one could understand that anguish and despair unless those who had imagination enough to see that the killing of a man's dream may be the killing of his heart.

Another day, as we went up to town in the same carriage, we talked about the Land League, with which I had had nominal sympathies, while he, I supposed, would have abhorred it. Secretly I had always thought it an ugly and sordid, though necessary, revolution. I have had less dislike of it since that day. He said :

' When I was a young police-officer in the County Tyrone—that was in the Sixties before the tenants had any protection—I knew a whole countryside to be cleared out of its little farms and holdings because a land-agent wanted a park. And I knew a man whose people had held their farm for over a hundred years, to be driven back into the mountains and the bogs, so that the rich little farm they had made with endless toil should be given to the discarded mistress of the landlord. My heart burnt within me at these things so that I could not sit by and do nothing. I wrote of what I had seen and known to Mr. Gladstone. It was a serious thing to do at the time, for I was a young officer, and discipline was very strict. I signed it in the name of my own son, at that time a child of two and a half years.'

It was the measure of his simplicity that he should have signed in the name of his little son.

' And that,' I said, ' was the genesis of the first Irish Land Bill.'

' It may have been. I asked John Morley when he was writing Gladstone's *Life* to look for that letter among the papers ; but I suppose he did not find it, as I never heard.'

One day we were talking of what to do with our boys, and the advisability of letting them have their own say in the matter. Sir David said in his quiet way :

' There was once a horse-dealer, poor Tom Meleady,

a straight, true fellow, of whom I was very fond. He was ill for some months before he died, and I used to go and sit with him. He told me once about the old days before the railways, when he used to lead a string of horses from Galway to Dublin. "It was a long road," he said, "but I never minded, being with the horses : I was so fond of them always. I used to let them go their own way, grazing when they wanted to, going on again when they wanted to, never forcing them. The great thing, sir, is for people to do the work they like the way they like. Never try to turn any one from doing the work he likes to do. The work is twice as well done if a man has his heart in it."

There are many things Sir David told us, which are too recent to be written here. And good stories, which must come in their place with other good stories. We laughed a great deal on those Sunday afternoons—when we did not know the time was coming for laughter to be all but extinguished.

## CHAPTER VIII

### DUNSANY

ON a day when we were sitting in the library at Shankill A. E. told us, among other things, about a picture of Lord Dunsany's of a great snowy waste, with the print of footsteps going across it, just the footsteps. I was rather fascinated by the idea—very Dunsanyesque—and I wrote some verses to accompany the picture, and sent them to Lord Dunsany. A little later I had this letter.

s.s. *Adolf Woermann,*  
OFF PORT SAID, Dec. 29th.

DEAR MRS. HINKSON,—Of course I remember meeting you : one does not meet a poet every day. I remember that you told me you had just read a tale of mine in the *Celtic Christmas*, and I was glad you liked it. I 've been away lion-hunting, but I 'll send you the picture as soon as I get home, which should be in a few days after you get this. I 'd be delighted if it 's any use to you, but I 'm afraid the presence of a somewhat gruesome beast that is nosing along after the footsteps may spoil it for you. I think the poem is charming.

The picture is very roughly something like this :

(He drew a very weird pen-and-ink sketch. A bit of snowy land bounded by mountain peaks. All around space and the stars. The footsteps, and the beast following, and at the edge of Space is written, 'The End.')

It all happened on a very thin world. You can see the stars above it and stars underneath. The beast was supposed to be Remorse, following some one all his life. But this sketch is rather a mess. I 'll send you the other soon. I 'm afraid it will be no good to you. It was a great pleasure to see your poem.

I don't know what became of that poem. Probably I shall find it some day in a book.

A little later we, my Pamela and I, went down to the Dunsanys. With Lady Dunsany one fell in love at once. Nothing could be sweeter, gentler, more charming. Lord Dunsany was, I soon found, of the intemperate talkers, of which I was very glad, because he paralysed me with shyness. He was well worth listening to. He is a big, boyish man, who gives one the impression of always having had his own way ; but though he seemed overbearing in argument at first, and reduced my opposition, such as it was, to pulp, he was really very simple and in a sense gentle. He was like Stevenson's Henley, who would roar you down in an argument and finally, after a deal of sound and fury, would discover that you had points of agreement all the time.

Dunsany kept a glorious tea-table in those pre-war days. That first time I was too shy of Lord Dunsany to enjoy my tea, but I watched him enjoying his, surrounded by battalions of little glass pots containing all sorts of jams and honey, quite delicious to look at, to say nothing of lavish supplies of cream, hot cakes, all manner of sandwiches and tea-table delicacies. I am sure I could have made a tremendous tea, but I did not : instead I ate delicately and listened to Lord Dunsany demolishing the work of the Christian era, especially in Rome, where he said Christianity had destroyed the magnificent Pagan Art. At last I said in a small and trembling voice : 'Will no one say a word for Christianity ?' But no one did, though Lady Dunsany said, laughing, that Dunsany was saying more than he meant, and that Christianity had plenty to be said for it.

That evening I was rejoiced when Lord Dunsany brought out his pictures to show me—extraordinary pictures, as strange and fascinating as his stories. Afterwards he read the stories, rolling out the magnificent names and the sonorous procession of the words with great enjoyment to himself and me. Usually I become sleepy while being read to, but I did not feel at all sleepy. I knew he was enjoying himself, as I

was, and what could a good guest or a good host wish for more?

It was very amusing to hear Lord Dunsany talk about his experience with publishers, who, being business men, took it for granted that Lord Dunsany—a rich man and a genius—would be content with glory and leave the filthy lucre to them. They were distressed when the noble author insisted on the business side of the agreement. A little later Sidney Sime was telling at Dunsany how much joy it gave Lord Howard de Walden to receive a cheque for two guineas, earned by his pen. After all it must be a delight to those to whom money comes without any effort of their own to *earn* it. It explains why Society ladies contribute to the magazines, and the strenuous young aristocrat occasionally goes off to work with his hands.

I remember an amusing thing Lord Dunsany told us, in a certain vein of indignation, of an application received from a London illustrated paper, offering him two or three guineas if he would contribute to a symposium ‘What it Feels Like to be a Millionaire.’ He replied that they had better ask Lord Howard de Walden since he did not happen to be a millionaire and could not know what a millionaire felt like. He received an effusive letter of thanks for his interest in the symposium, saying in conclusion that the Editor had acted upon his kind advice and written to Lord Howard de Walden, asking him to state for the benefit of their readers what it felt like to be a millionaire.

Like all geniuses Lord Dunsany is very simple. At dinner that first evening he asked me if I used salt or bone-dust, and went on to explain that some one he had met in a railway carriage had told him that a certain table condiment had a large proportion of bone dust in its composition. He grew very excited over the matter, imagining *what* bones. It was almost as lurid as the *Times Kadaververwertungsanstalt*. After that occasion every time I met him at table I asked him carelessly if he used salt or bone dust. He always rose eagerly.

'Oh, you know about that, do you ? It 's extraordinary how few people know ! You are the first person I 've met, in fact . . . '

It was a charming house to stay at. Lady Dunsany would have made any house charming, and Lord Dunsany was, of course, extraordinarily interesting and very kind, with the simplicity which was lovable and provocative.

(I am afraid I speak of him as though he, as well as those happy visits, were in the past tense, which, very happily for many things and people, he is not.)

The hall at Dunsany was full of the heads of his big-game shooting—terrible heads. Sidney Sime, that cynical person, whom we met there—he was already an old friend of my husband—in the early summer of the fateful year, professed to regard them as no more than common trophies of slaughter—like legs of mutton, for example. This point of view puzzled and somewhat depressed Lord Dunsany.

He talked literature to me usually, but one day he discussed rabbit stalking as a substitute for big-game stalking, and waxed enthusiastic about it.

'Oh, by Jove !' he said, 'it is grand sport. They have such fine ears and they are off like the wind.' One had a mental picture of bison or antelope, but it was really rabbits. 'If the sun is behind you it throws your shadow ; then it is difficult and exciting, you have to hide behind every grass blade as you get nearer and nearer . . . '

Lord Dunsany is six-foot-four of height.

The atmosphere of the house was very literary. Lady Dunsany had grown up to literature. Her father and mother, when Lord Jersey was Governor of Australia, made a pilgrimage to Samoa to see Robert Louis Stevenson. I have said that A. E. said of Lady Lytton that she was more like a flower than any woman he ever saw. Lady Dunsany was—is—very flower-like, a pansy perhaps, or a wild anemone, something delicate and shy, kind and gentle. I think all the talk was about literary people and things. To be literary was to have

the entrée to Dunsany ; I don't think other people counted.

The day after our arrival Lord Dunsany went out hunting, and we motored with Lady Dunsany to the meet of the Meath Hounds, taking Tara on our way. It was a very wild day, and when I was asked afterwards my impressions of Tara I said it was a Big Wind, which pleased Lady Dunsany : I have heard of that saying of mine from an English correspondent whom I have never seen, since then.

Padraic Colum had been at Dunsany just before us, and had told little Randal Plunkett, the only son, of various charms which would enable him to see the palace on Tara and the Kings and Queens and Knights and Ladies. I might have seen them, in the wind perhaps, if I had not been trying to keep on my hat.

Lord Dunsany talked a good deal of Francis Ledwidge, of whose discovery he was very proud, calling him always 'Mr. Ledwidge.'

When we went there again in the early summer we found H. G. and Mrs. Wells already there. They came in from the river to the glorious tea. I had always been very much alarmed of H. G. Wells, because of a sentence in one of his books. What that sentence was and why it should have alarmed me is known only to myself. Very much to my stupefaction I found myself walking up and down, up and down, with him in the avenue outside after tea. I was quite pleased with myself for being so little afraid ; but the next morning when I was walking with him again the terror returned. I was dumb. I thought he was inordinately bored ; perhaps he was ; we could see Lady Dunsany sitting under a tree in the distance teaching Randal his lessons. I asked myself why any one should want to talk to me with that distant prospect of Lady Dunsany.

'Don't you feel that you want to go and do some work ?' I said to him. 'I am often taken that way myself, being accustomed to industrious mornings.'

He said he did feel like that and went away, but he

came back in a very short time and joined Lady Dunsany and me under the tree, accusing me of having rudely driven him away because I wanted to talk to Lady Dunsany. But it wasn't that, though Lady Dunsany was very good to talk to.

I admired Mr. Wells's *sang-froid* next morning, when, while we waited for Lady Dunsany's appearance at the breakfast-table, the big spirit-lamp under the kettle went a-fire. He was sitting half-in, half-out the open window, explaining that it was an excellent position from which to run away if the fire spread. It did spread, to the tablecloth. I rang the bell frantically: no one else did anything. Presently the butler came in and, without flurry, enveloped the conflagration in a large table napkin, putting it out. We must have looked fools to him. One realised then the superiority of the trained man to the mere intellectual.

Some of the party spent the morning on the river in canoes. It was a small and muddy river. I preferred *terra firma*, especially as Randal had danced about us, shrieking joyfully: 'O Mummie, they've got the leaky boat. Isn't it fun?' It was Mr. Wells and Pam who had the leaky boat. But the morning passed without mishap. Lord Dunsany had gone off cricketing, Sidney Sime and Joseph Holbrook arrived for lunch. Sidney Sime was another person I was secretly afraid of. He had declined to illustrate a poem of mine, which my husband had sent to him, with somewhat mordant comments. And there was something merciless about his brilliant drawings as I remembered them: I might have said 'heartless and soulless' before I met him. We talked of mysticism—of all things!—on the tennis-lawn after lunch. I am glad to believe that he was sincerely sorry when he learnt that we were leaving that afternoon. He and Joseph Holbrook came to see us later at Shankill. The latter had already set a lyric of mine 'Summer-Sweet' to music, so we were, in a sense, old friends. When the war is over I hope to finish that talk with Sidney Sime.

After all we were fortunate in our meeting with H. G. Wells. My thirteen-year-old Pam had just finished *Mr. Polly*. She had all the gags of it by heart. He could not but be pleased : these are the kind of things which please an author. He made a sketch in her autograph-book of Mr. Polly, sitting on the stile, murmuring ‘Rotten, beastly stinkin’ ‘ole !’ after Mrs. Polly had given him that nice meal of cold pork and pickled onions and cheese. Pam also instructed him on the Irish question, a fact to which he has referred in *Mr. Britling sees it Through*.

One of those days Lord Dunsany talked to Pam about his big-game-hunting in something of these terms :

‘ While we breakfasted I said carelessly : “ Well, what are we going to do to-day ? ” “ Oh,” said my hunter, “ I have my own little game on to-day. I will tell you later.” So, afterwards, when we had mounted our horses he disclosed his plan to me. We were just inside the border of the lion country, and he told me that about 4 o’clock that morning two lions had come down to the river beside which we camped, to drink, and had roared lustily for about five minutes, through which I had slept soundly : so he proposed hunting for the day’s work. I agreed, and we set off ; but luck seemed to have deserted us that day. All the morning we hunted, but it was midday before we sighted game, and it was not a lion.

‘ I was going a little ahead of my hunter when I perceived an enormous rhinoceros standing about thirty yards away, and beyond him another, and beyond that one yet another, and another. It so happened that my hunter did not see the three beyond the first one, but only the leader ; however, I did not know this at the time. When he said “ Shoot,” pointing at the leader, I raised my gun and fired. The rhinoceros swung round and dashed blindly past us, the herd clattering behind. I fired again and missed : I fired again and again, only wounding him, until, just as he was charging, and it was death for either of us, I fired and killed him. The

herd, furious when they saw him fall, charged in a body, but they went past us, and stopped with their heads up, sniffing the air. Then they wheeled about and galloped off into the forest.

'We dragged the dead rhinoceros down to the river, and that night we camped near him. When darkness fell we went out and sat near him, with our loaded rifles across our knees, waiting for the lions which we knew would come to devour the remains. The frogs all started barking with the coming of night, and kept up a regular concert, barking against each other. And then, quite suddenly, every sound ceased. There was not a movement on the water nor on the land except the stealthy pad-pad of the lions.

'Sitting there in the darkness one realised how trivial all the things of the civilised world were beside this great thing, and how far away seemed that other world of peaceful towns and villages and farms from this wilderness where we sat clutching our rifles and waiting for the king of beasts.

'Then a most extraordinary thing happened. We were suddenly enveloped in a thick mist, which wrapped us round as in a cloak so that we could see nothing, but we knew by the growling and roaring of the lions that they had found their meat. All that night we sat there, while the lions roared close beside us ; but, just before dawn, they became quiet, and when the mist cleared there was nothing to be seen but a single hyæna who stood out for a moment from the forest, and fled at the sight of two men sitting with rifles across their knees.'

I have not seen Lord Dunsany since that June of 1914. Lady Dunsany came to lunch at Shankill a little later to meet the two poets, Joseph and Nancy Campbell. Nancy Campbell she knew already as Nancy Maude, who had made a very romantic marriage.

We were to have gone to Dunsany very soon afterwards, but all those plans went down before the events of August 1914. Black Monday had come and gone when Pamela and my husband met Lord Dunsany in that

wonderful room at the top of Plunkett House, where the *Irish Homestead* is edited under the eyes of Angels and Archangels, Powers, Principalities, Dominions. Sidney Sime said, visiting that room : 'So this is where turnips are made ! Good Lord, it 's a mad world !' Lord Dunsany was saying : 'I shall never come back. None of the officers will come back, certainly not a man of my height.' And again he was denouncing the local politicians, with characteristic whirlwind energy, and listening with a certain unexpected sweet reasonableness to my husband's defence of them.

I asked Lady Dunsany once if she was not alarmed when he was absent on his lion-hunting expeditions, with no news coming through from him. She said, 'I know he is a very good shot.'

Here in the West of Ireland where literature is held in little honour, except by an occasional priest, I sigh for such a house as Dunsany. How different life would be if our lot had placed us in Meath rather than in Mayo !

## CHAPTER IX

### THE GENESIS OF THE REBELLION

I MUST return now to the great strike of 1913 which had in it, though we did not know it at the time, the beginnings of greater things. It started with a general, or almost general, tramway strike, and extended to the quay-labourers and allied workers. It held up the trade of Dublin for six months, caused untold misery and suffering, and in the end the men were beaten. That was the genesis of the Easter Week, 1916, Rebellion.

The whole world that is interested in such things knows that the conditions of labour in Dublin are appalling. They cry to Heaven for vengeance. The rooms in the tenement-houses are dreadful. They are crazy, toppling old houses, some of them built in the eighteenth century. When there is a big wind, or sometimes without any wind at all, they tumble down and some people are killed. Then there is an outcry for a few days until the thing is forgotten. There are twenty thousand families in Dublin living in one-room tenements. I believe there is a big housing scheme, but I suppose it has been held up by the war, for the Dublin slums continue and poverty is still more apparent in the streets of Dublin than in any other city. Frowsy-headed, shawled women are everywhere. There is quite a considerable population of Dublin boys who sleep in passages, or anywhere they can get cover. The 'hot wall' of Guinness's brewery used to be, perhaps still is, a favourite out-of-door dormitory. These boys become gipsies of a sort. Perhaps they would never take kindly to habitations. The newsboys of Dublin are recruited

from this class. They go bare-footed in winter, and if there is hard weather their poor feet get frost-bitten. A kindly Dublin newspaper runs a Boot Fund ; but I am not sure that boots on a stockingless foot which leak presently are not worse than bare feet.

They are adorable, those newsboys. They have beautiful manners ; they are the merriest things alive, despite their wretched condition ; it is a delight to talk to them, they are so quick and witty. They are innocent, I am sure ; they are too joyous for anything but innocence.

But the conditions of life in the tenement houses ! Browning's skeleton horse in '*Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came*' :

‘He must be wicked to have borne such pain,’

often occurs to me when I think of the decent slum population of Dublin. The innocent ought not to suffer such things ; and these people are in the main innocent, honest, and respectable.

There is no parallel for it in England. If, on a drenching Irish day, a woman and a child came to your door hawking vegetables or fish, their poor coverings drip-dripping in your decent hall, their faces blue and pinched, you might think them outcasts, as they would be in England. In Ireland they are probably as respectable as you, and of a higher degree of virtue. To any one condemned to live in the Dublin slums, with their rotten walls and filthy staircases, their appalling sanitary conditions, their huddled crowdedness, wages more or less hardly matter. The decent working population has nowhere else to go to. That virtue could live and thrive in such places is a proof of the divine in the human spirit.

These slums are not by any manner of means dangerous. No one will think of snatching your watch or knocking you on the head. The people are, indeed, extremely friendly. The one dangerous and scandalous bit of Dublin is at the north-east corner. Unfortunately

that corner was spared when so much of Dublin was burnt and blown to pieces.

A London editor wrote to me the other day of the cellar population of London. In a phrase of terrible eloquence he described their conditions. ‘They live in graves, without the peace of the grave.’ Dublin does not run much to cellars, but all of squalid misery that could be got between four walls is in some of those slum rooms.

Some social reformers attribute the misery to the drinking habits of the women. Others will tell you that the estimate of these habits is grossly exaggerated. I have very seldom seen a drunken woman in Dublin of late years. Such a spectacle was commoner in my girlhood, and then it was by far a worse form of drunkenness, due to the bad whisky. Legislation has interfered with the manufacture of bad whisky. The blue-stone whisky, specially manufactured for Fair days, which used to send the men home maniacs, is gone or is less potent. Guinness’s stout, which is, or was, largely the drink of the Dublin poor is an honest drink and a food as well. The judge who took the merciful view that drunkenness, even when it led to manslaughter, was the shortest way out of Manchester, might excuse the alleged drinking of the Dublin poor as being the shortest way out of slumdom.

Doubtless the life has its recompenses. One who had risen out of it said: ‘I was born in a tenement, and upon my word there’s a good deal to be said for the tenement. There’s great neighbourliness and there’s great sociability. What we had we shared with each other. Life was never dull.’

Some of these slum rooms, which are the drawing-rooms of splendid old Georgian houses, the town-houses of the Irish aristocracy before the Union made absentees of them, are enormously large. It is said of these that they accommodate four families, one in each corner, and a lodger in the middle. A Dublin architect describing one of these rooms for me, added, ‘And the four families might live out of sight of each other so big is it.’

A man of genius who had been submerged talked of those days.

'I'd slept for five nights in Stephen's Green,' he said, 'and I used to sneak the bread the children flung to the ducks. Sometimes I got in first and sometimes the ducks were before me. There came a morning when I was sitting in the sun, feeling "happy but wake, like a fly in December" as the saying is. There wasn't much food in what bread I could get from the ducks. I hadn't been lucky; the ducks were getting up to my tricks. Some one spoke to me, and when I looked up I saw a man who owed me half a crown. He didn't look as though he had half a crown about him, but he had, and what's more, he paid it like a decent man. I knew a place where I'd get a doss for one-and-six a week, and I was tired of sleeping out in the cold, so I secured a week's lodging. I lived for a week on the other shilling. When it was gone I tried doing without food, and I kept out of the landlady's way, for I didn't want to turn out to sleep in the Green again. The doss was terrible. We were lying, heads and tails, all over the place, and the blankets—well, I'll spare your feelings; it was a congested area, sure enough. I'd come to the point of thinking I'd go out and find a blind beggar to rob, or a little child going for her dada's porter with a couple of pennies in her little fist, when the landlady came looking for me. "Now," said I to myself, "here's for the road, and a tongue-lashing as well, for I've cheated her out of the price of the doss." No such thing! "Come in here," she says, taking me by the arm, "an' have a bit with me and himself." My head reeled with joy at the prospect, but I could hear a voice saying very far away, "No, thanks, but I'm grateful for your kindness all the same." "Come on," she says, "an' don't be so proud." I'd had time to feel the greatest terror lest that dam fool who was talking somewhere far away should be taken at his word; so I went with the good woman, and the sight of a big fat loaf on the table was like Heaven. They kept me three months and never

charged me a penny. It was a terrible place, sure enough, but we were good to each other. If it was only tuppence we had we shared it.'

Well, so much for the Dublin housing and the Dublin poor. They were out in the great strike of 1913. Dublin slumdom, chronically on the edge of famine, was pushed over. All the charitable agencies were at work. The English Trades Unions sent over relief ships. The Dublin bourgeoisie was very much up against Larkin. The people did not complain at all. A great crowd of men stood all day in the wide space by the Custom House, facing Liberty Hall, all looking one way, waiting for the oracle to speak.

Such a patient, quiet, well-mannered crowd! One felt ashamed to go down there, well fed and well clothed. The men were paler and more haggard each time one saw them. Sometimes you brushed up against them in the street, carrying home the relief-potatoes in a sack over their shoulders. People talked of menace, but there was none; one only fancied a brooding terror in those days. Perhaps, after all, as some one said, they were being better fed than usual.

When you came among them they made way for you to pass. The slightest hint of sympathy, and they were all friendliness. Once, one of us asked a man of a group in front of Liberty Hall, 'Is Larkin in the Hall?' 'No, sir: Mr. Larkin isn't. Mr. Connolly is. Would you like to see Mr. Connolly?' The whole group was eager that we should see Mr. Connolly. Even the emendation of the *Mr.* was not stressed.

One of us was too careful to see Mr. Connolly, and for my part I have regretted it ever since. Larkin was the meteor that flashed across the skies and leapt into darkness. Behind him was a born leader of men, a most extraordinary man, James Connolly. It is a loss not to have known him.

Labour was beaten in the Dublin Strike of 1913. The Rebellion of 1916 was a counsel of despair. James Connolly was its 'onlie begetter.' Something violent had

to be done, he felt, to win justice for the people, to draw attention to their evil case, to frighten good comfortable folk. So he began training the Citizen Army, never putting more than two hundred men on the street at one time, so that the police and authorities were deceived as to the menace. He was far too clever a man to believe in the success of his Rebellion. It was a means to shock and frighten the indifferent world into heeding. The preparations for the Rebellion were all complete before many of the Volunteer leaders knew what was afoot. John M'Neill tried to stop it at the last moment, and succeeded to some extent. O'Rahilly, a very fine and gallant gentleman, rushed into Dublin with the same purpose, and, finding it was too late, stood by the others. A meeting of the Volunteer leaders to stop the Rebellion was in session when some one rushed in with the news that the Rebellion had broken out. One of the leaders took his hat, and said : 'My boys are out and my place is with them.' That is the genesis of the Dublin Rebellion of 1916.

These very men had cheered enthusiastically at a recruiting meeting in Foster Place the tale of some heroism of the Irish soldiers. Bitterness lay still beyond Easter Week, 1916, and the regime of Sir John Maxwell.

But all that was still out of men's vision. During those years our old friends, Count and Countess Plunkett, often came to see us. He was one of my earliest friends, one of the first to take me by the hand when I began to write. About 1881-82 he edited an extremely cultivated review, which he had called *Hibernia*. I have the two tall thin volumes on my bookshelves. It was much contributed to by Trinity College, over the way from the editorial offices at 4 College Green. Jane Barlow was contributing poems to *Hibernia* ten years before the appearance of *Bogland Studies*. Dowden was among the poets. Count Plunkett himself wrote delightful poems which he left unsigned. It was oddly esoteric in the violent days of the Land League, and, too soon, it died.

Count Plunkett was the gentlest of men, with a streak

of the fighter in him. A representative Catholic, he yet fought the priests in the matter of Mr. Parnell's leadership, and stood by the Chief in those last great days as he had not when the cause was triumphant.

The last man one would have said to have violent and bloody days in his future. The gentlest of the gentle, very good and devoted to good works, with a wife who was entirely in sympathy with him : a cultivated man, loving learning and the arts. One would have prognosticated for these two the smoothest pathway through life, and 'an old age serene and bright.'

Oddly enough, when the Strike leaders made their one fatal mistake, which brought them up against the great force of the Catholic Church in Dublin, *i.e.* their plan for sending the children of the strikers to homes to be provided for them by the English Trades Unions, Countess Plunkett was among those who opened homes for the children in Dublin, so frustrating Larkin's plans. For that reason, and for her alleged ownership of slum dwellings, she was the object of Larkin's violent denunciations. Another curious thing to remember is that she placed a house at the disposal of the Committee, under Lady Aberdeen's presidency, which was starting clubs for soldiers' wives in the early days of the war. But, as I have said, the bitterness was not yet.

One day of that summer we drove up to a house which, I always said, had the Sugar Loaf in its back garden, the Sugar Loaves being the two beautiful peaks which rise up over Bray. The old Irish called them the Golden Spears : I do not know who was responsible for the grocery appellation. There at tea we met Joseph Plunkett, whom I had last seen as a baby seated on the carpet with his elementary toys around him. He was now a tall, fair, delicate youth, with something misty about him, very full of theories and with a somewhat opinionated air. He had a very young manner of having threshed everything out and settled it before you were born. If one had known that the greatest of all experi-

ences awaited him, that he was one of the predestined, one might have understood better and been more patient.

Another day I went to tea with Miss Winifred Letts, to meet Thomas MacDonagh and his wife. They came late and I left early to catch a train, and it was dusk of a winter afternoon, so that I carried away only the impression of an eager, friendly young man's face under clustering curls. I wish I had not been so careful in seeking my train that winter afternoon.

Again we met the Sheehy Skeffingtons at Padraic Colum's house, and liked them. 'Skeffy,' as the Dublin crowd called him, laughing at him with affection, was the bravest of men. He was a pacifist and a suffragist—all manner of 'ists,'—but an entirely lovable personality. I like his brother-in-law Tom Kettle's tribute to him :

'He was to me the good comrade of many hopes, and, though the ways of this scurvy and disastrous world led us apart, he remains to me an inextinguishable flame. This "agitator," this "public menace," this "disturber," was wholly emancipated from egotism and incapable of personal hatred. He was a man who had ranged the whole world of ideas. Strangest of all, he, who turned away from soldiers, left to all soldiers an example of courage in death to which there are not many parallels. This brave and honourable man died to the rattle of musketry. His name will be recalled to the ruffle of drums.'

The manner of Sheehy Skeffington's death was a most terrible blow to Tom Kettle, who was then just on the eve of his departure for France. He offered, Mrs. Kettle told me, if Mrs. Sheehy Skeffington wished it, to take off his uniform, but 'my sister would not accept such a sacrifice.' She told me further that her sister did not wish Captain Colthurst to be punished, recognising that he was not responsible ; that she strongly disapproved of the manner of cross-examination of the young officers, who were entirely in the hands of their superior officers ;

that a statement of hers entirely exonerated Captain Morgan of the Irish Rifles.

'Ships that pass in the night.' When the immense tragedy of Sheehy Skeffington's death came one wished that one had not passed so easily 'this brave and honourable man.' There was a Sunday when he and his wife and child walked down our road to the sea. We might have intercepted them, given them tea and a handshake, if we had only known the tragedy to which their feet walked.

## CHAPTER X

### FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS

A. E. was one of the prophets of the Great Strike. He went over to a meeting at the Albert Hall and delivered a passionate speech in favour of the workers, slogging about him with characteristic vehemence when this mildest of men is aroused in his sympathies for the poor and oppressed. Probably he was less than just to the priests who resisted the deportation of the children to England, and he got into some trouble with the Co-operative Societies. But it passed. Every one knew his heart was all right. If not universally accepted in Ireland—let us be cautious: there is the north-east corner to be considered—I think he is the man who comes nearest to being universally accepted. One feels inclined to say of him as Lord Henry Fitzgerald said of Lord Edward, ‘Dear fellow, he is perfect !’

That burning speech in the Albert Hall gave great comfort to our English man-servant, whose long term with us was now, alas, drawing to a close. He had suffered greatly from our Bohemian guests, who came to dinner in their ordinary clothes. He was rather bitter about it, recalling past glories when he had ‘exceeded,’ which became increasingly often. That one of our guests should have been heard at the Albert Hall and reported in the Sunday papers, rehabilitated them and us in his estimation.

I have written of the people who counted most in our life at Shankill, but there were others who counted for kindness and companionship during those three good years before we went into the wilderness. When we took our

walks abroad we were always meeting friends who went a bit of the way with us. There was the Judge, a beautiful person to look at, with his silver hair, his fine face, and stateliness of bearing. His brother, Lord Ashbourne, was called ‘the silver-tongued.’ I am sure the Judge had a golden voice, and he was thoroughly well read—he was one of those nice people who bought every book I produced and would not take one for a present, much less offer the poor author the last insult of borrowing her own books from her. (Let this not be taken as applying to those to whom she *offers* to lend !) We used to meet him on our walks, and he would walk back with us and stand at the gate talking till we were all late for lunch. We never could induce him to come in and share ours. I believe he was the most receptive person alive ; but he must have told us very little, since, except an impression of Mr. Parnell, with whom he had been in Parliament, I cannot remember any statement of his ; yet we were surely walking and talking with the delight of people who find the same tastes and interests in each other. The impression was, briefly :

‘I only saw him in his exterior aspect during the sessions of 1886-87, in political conflict, and I never exchanged words with him in the lobbies. He only turned up for important debates when he would deliver a carefully prepared speech. He was not fluent, but Mr. Gladstone, I think, paid him the compliment that his language exactly fitted his thought, and that he did not say more than he meant. In apparently uncertain health he spoke with dignity and force, never stooping to personalities or courtesy.’

The Judge’s brother, the Captain, was a most delightful Old Boy. Only soldiers and sailors, and occasionally a Catholic priest, especially of the monastic kind, remain Old Boys to the end. I think it must be that the barrack and the ship and the monastery are perpetual schools, so that their inmates remain schoolboys, and are beyond the isolation and the struggle with the world of the ordinary man.

Captain Gibson was one of our very first visitors, and he came with the most delightful intentions, for he carried us off to a performance of massed bands at Kingstown, and afterwards we had a glorious tea at the Royal Yacht Club. He had fought in the Maori War, and he used to tell us many cheerful stories of his pranks when he was a young soldier. Still he got in all the gaieties within reach, and went off to a Bournemouth hotel every winter. He was always telling stories, and they were somehow very like himself. Even when he took to a bath-chair, Mrs. Gibson used to say to him, when we met : ‘ Now what was that story you had to tell Mrs. Hinkson ? ’ and then the story would come. One was of a neighbour of his in the Co. Tipperary, who employed two men to saw wood. They used the heavy old cross-cut saw, and they were very leisurely. As the employer sat in his dining-room listening to the song of the saw it seemed to him to be saying ‘ Beef an’ Cabbage: Fair an’ Aisy. Beef an’ Cabbage: Fair an’ Aisy.’ He flung up the window in a great rage, and he shouted to the men : ‘ It won’t be Fair an’ Aisy any longer. I put you on piece-work from this minute.’ Then the song of the saw was changed. It went ‘ Hands-Up ! Hands-Down ! Hands-Up ! Hands-Down ! ’ as quickly as possible ; and he listened, well contented.

Another story was of a certain Major K——, a poor man, who went to a shoot at a great house. The last day of the shoot the head gamekeeper was being tipped with five-pound notes, etc. Major K—— waited till the last, when he pressed something into the haughty functionary’s hand, closing his fingers upon it while he said : ‘ My poor fellow, others will give you gold and notes ; but none will give you a more useful present than mine.’ It was a box of matches.

I told this story to Philip Hanson, who had been Mr. Wyndham’s private secretary. He said grimly : ‘ H’m ! He wasn’t going to shoot there again ’ ; and went on to tell me of a shoot on an English estate where, when the beaters were slow in coming up to the guns, the squire

peppered them in the legs with gunshot. Those were feudal times.

Mrs. Gibson told me one day that when she lived in the Co. Tipperary, she was obliged to give up buying Protestant chickens, they were so much more expensive than Catholic ones.

There was a certain bit of Shankill which had half a dozen red-brick bungalows clustered together. My children called it 'Proddy Shankill,' I suppose because the little settlement had a genteelly Protestant look. A lady who lived in one of the bungalows, who belonged to a very Low Church Irish Protestant family, but did not share the narrowness, implored the children almost with tears to reconsider the name. She said it made her hate her own house, and that she could not go on living there unless they found another name.

We certainly had a very nice lot of neighbours. There was a retired Indian Civil Servant, with a vivacious wife and pretty daughters, who lived in a most wonderful house, designed and wall-painted by John Hungerford Pollen. The bedrooms were all downstairs, and you went up a flight of steps from the hall door without any intervening hall to the drawing-room and dining-room, painted with a History of Good Women or something of the sort. As I was too blind to see the paintings I have not remembered the subjects. The house was Bavarian, I think, in its inspiration. There was a good deal of German lettering about it, I seem to remember. It had belonged to Judge Lawson, whose life was in great danger at one time from the Invincibles. Mrs. Rowan Hamilton told me that at that time he used to go home through her grounds avoiding the lonely private road which led to his and one or two other houses. We loved the vivacious lady of the house, to say nothing of the two pretty daughters, whose oval faces became their ear-rings, and the kind, gentle papa. One of the other houses on that road had the most wonderful collection of *objets d'art*. The papa there had a passion for collecting. Every penny he could lay hands on went

to the collection. It overflowed : the house had no room for it. You could not enter without knocking into something precious. The collector honoured me once, at his kind daughter's request, by showing me some of the gems of the collection. By the way he turned and said 'What ?' very sharply when I spoke, I gathered that he was not aware of me but only of the collection.

Some of the neighbours thought the money might have been better expended. They said gloomily that it would never come back. I heard the other day that the first little lot, hardly to be missed, brought in £4000. So was the collector justified.

One winter afternoon I went to see a very sweet invalid lady with my Pamela. The dusk was already in the house when we arrived, and the door was opened to us by a young servant. It was a very old house, set in a garden, with dim rooms, especially in the twilight. We had our tea from cups of delicate egg-shell china, and we had a quiet gentle talk about books and children and country things with the dear little soft-voiced old lady.

When we stood up to go, she said :

'I wonder if you would mind meeting my brother. He is . . . not exactly like other people. Something happened when he was very little. He is quite harmless.'

It was disquieting—in the glimmering dusk—with only an invalid lady and a child-servant. One did not know what one might be going to see—an insane person, something misshapen ; but I said, with a faint cheerfulness, that of course I should be delighted.

Our hostess went out with us into the little hall. She opened a door and called 'Peter !' Out came a little figure running like a child. 'You wanted to see Mrs. Hinkson, Peter.' The little figure bobbed like a well-behaved child. 'I've read *Her Ladyship*, Mrs. Hinkson,' it said ; and then, as though overcome by shyness and flying to some kind arms, it disappeared again within the room. Five or six times the little

figure appeared, always running, each time naming another book of mine before disappearing. It was such a dear, little, polite, shy boy of seventy or so.

'There now,' said our hostess as she opened the door into the autumnal evening, 'Peter will be so pleased. He has been longing to see you. He is so fond of your books.'

Another day a fine motor appeared before our door, the very finest and latest thing in motors, a sixty horse-power Darracq. From the window a splendid-looking, elderly gentleman looked out smiling. He was a neighbour, unknown up to that time, who had come to take me for a drive, because he had read my poetry and liked it. I put on my hat : the nurse who was with him went outside with the chauffeur, and off we flew up the mountains. My new friend had a splendid torso—a highly-coloured, aquiline face ; very blue eyes ; a magnificent beard ; waving grey hair. He was somewhat like Sir Frederick Leighton as I remember him in a long-dead summer, only much handsomer and with a far more dominant face. Alas, the high colour and the bright eyes were indicative of pain. He was almost helpless from the waist downwards : but one could not have believed that looking at him, with a flower in the lapel of his velvet coat and a very fine cigar between his lips. He laughed and talked a good deal before he got tired. One could see that the swift motor helped him to live his crippled life, for he must have been a man of action. We went up right over the mountains, swiftly and easily in the powerful, luxurious car. He wanted to take me up to Sally Gap at the highest point of the hills, but the chauffeur demurred, saying the wind was too high up there and would turn over the car.

After that first drive I had many, and paid many visits to my new friend and his wife in their beautiful house full of wonderful things ; a Gobelin tapestry of a hunting scene on the walls ; Battersea enamel in candlesticks and boxes, not one or two pieces, but many ; the most precious things in silver and gold and china and

glass, including one of those French rarities of a gold box from which springs a little golden bird and sings. I used to visit my friend in his own room where he sat by a generous fire, with the windows open, in his wheeled chair, his helpless lower limbs hidden by a rug. The room was full of the singing of birds and the scent of flowers : and everywhere were mementoes of foreign travel, Italian pictures on the walls, many beautiful things, and the splendid old man in his chair as fine as though a great Greek had chiselled him.

A touching thing was that I never saw him lifted in or out of his motor, for he had to be carried by men. And, of course, it was incredible that he could be so old —he was well up in the eighties, and the head and shoulders were those of a hale man of sixty.

We had delightful drives together, but he goes no more a-joy-riding in his Darracq, but trundles about in a station-fly. The last time I saw him was in the splendid summer of 1917. He sat in his chair laughing to see my Pam smoke a cigarette, envying her her tolerant mother. When he had seen the feat through he promptly presented her with a Treasury bank-note which he must have had for the purpose, for it lay on the little table by his chair, crisp and new.

His dear old wife occasionally puts ‘a tip’ into her letters to me, as though I were a schoolboy. Perhaps she does not know my reverend age ; perhaps thirty years of difference seems like youth to her. One day I woke up with an inordinate craving for a present, railing upon a stingy world. The morning post brought me a tip from Mrs. K—— and a pair of silver candlesticks from Mrs. Rowan Hamilton, copied from those which she had had made out of her ‘marriage silver’ seventy-two years before.

Then there was our friend in the big red-brick house at the end of the road, just overlooking the sea. Once I asked a friend of mine how she had come to know a musician who went down in the *Lusitania*. ‘Well,’ she said, with an air of preparing for a somewhat lengthy

narrative, ‘we were introduced through a cow.’ Our first introduction to the dear lady at the end of the road was through a dog which had bitten one of us. He was very old, and he was supposed to be toothless, but he had bitten every one from behind ; and being Ireland no one liked to say anything about it. Our complaint, indeed, was received by a butler with stony contempt, and by a coachman who tried to wheedle us into statements which would knock the bottom out of our case. Getting no more than that, on a chance encounter with a very pretty girl, behind whose skirts we could see the black-vised villain who had damaged so many legs, we made our complaint anew.

‘Mother will be so sorry,’ she said, and then looked at the sneaking rascal with a fond eye. ‘Not that the poor dear *could* do any harm : he is perfectly toothless.’

We didn’t like to say that he had some teeth and they met. But a few days later the dear, soft, kind mother came to call, and that was the beginning of another friendship. Now the pretty daughters are married, and the soldier son is at the war, and our dear neighbour sits in perpetual darkness in the kindly old house.

It was a very good time, but already the shadows were creeping over the dial. There had been the defeated Dublin strike, and the Ulster Volunteers had been formed to resist the ridiculous Home Rule Bill which pleased nobody. In the autumn of 1913 I went to stay with my friends, Mr. Justice and Mrs. Ross, at their place in Tyrone. And one day as we were motoring we met an Ulster Volunteer, cycling, with his rifle on his back. That month saw the great review of Ulster Volunteers at Baronscourt, the Duke of Abercorn’s place. My hostess kindly tried to arrange for my seeing the armed camp there, but we were just too late. I was not sorry. My Celtic and Catholic gorge would have risen at it.

In the following month the Irish Volunteer Movement began, as might have been expected.

## CHAPTER XI

### HUMOURS AND EXPERIENCES

ONE of those days John Muldoon, a ‘Party’ man whom we liked much, came to see us and presented me with an election address which is worth keeping.

#### EAST GALWAY VACANCY

*Candidate.*—M. G. Mullins, J.P., Loughrea. An Evicted Tenant on the Clanricarde Estate, who has applied to the Land Commission to have his Holding restored to him.

MULLINS will sit, act, and vote with the Party of which Mr. John Redmond, M.P., is Leader.

MULLINS will take up the Banner that fell from the hands of Honest John Roche who lived and died fighting the Evicted Tenant’s Cause.

MRS. MULLINS is First Cousin of John Roche’s Brother-in-Law. MULLINS is a subscriber to the Volunteer and Parliamentary Funds.

MULLINS will look after the interest of every man in East Galway who has a grievance.

MULLINS is the man that knows what to say, how to say it, and when to say it. He is a true Home Ruler, a Nationalist and a Patriot to the back-bone. He belongs to the ‘Clan O’Mullen of Connacht’ who are descended from Diarmuid Fionn, the 13th King of Connacht.

MULLINS was the first person that proposed the concrete footpath from Hall’s to the West Bridge.

MULLINS was the man that proposed the Duplex Lighting of the Town Lamps.

MULLINS was the man that proposed the Lamps should be left lighting all night on Fair eves.

MULLINS was the Person that got the Fair Green cleared [of mud and loose stones.

MULLINS was the man that fought to have the Washings of the Fever Hospital diverted from the Waters of the Lake. The Local Government Board Inspectors said it would not do much harm to the water.

MULLINS protested and said: ‘We want it to do *no* harm: away with it, bury it.’

MULLINS was the man that requisitioned the watering-cart to sprinkle the streets at the April Fair, when all business was practically suspended through the blinding dust that swept through the thoroughfare like the sands of the Sirocco.

MULLINS is the fighting chief that enacted the bye-laws at the Potato Market, giving the man that arrives at eleven the same facilities for weighing his load as the person who was on the spot at the peep of dawn.

Greatly to the loss of the House of Commons, but doubtless greatly to the advantage of the citizens of Loughrea, Mullins was not elected.

John Muldoon had just come back from a fiercely contested Limerick election. His statement at a meeting that the Party Candidate was a Co. Limerick man was contravened by a priest who was on the other side. ‘If he’s a Limerick man at all, he was born in a very small part of it.’ ‘You wouldn’t want the man to be born all over the place,’ roared John Muldoon.

One of those Sundays Sir David told us a story of an occasion when, as an Assistant Commissioner of Police, he had a car-driver before him on the complaint of an old lady that he had been insulting to her, that he had demanded more than his legal fare, finally that he had dawdled on the way for the purpose of annoying her. It should be explained that the legal fare for a Dublin hackney car within the city boundaries was sixpence, and many Dublin stories turn on the wrangles between the drivers and those who stuck to the letter of the law. At the third accusation, the ‘jarvey’ rose. ‘That’s not true, anyway,’ he said, ‘for I’d drive like hell to get rid of her.’ Sir David added that he told this story to Lord Spencer, the then Viceroy, who was a very solemn person, and, for once, he smiled.

A friend we saw much of in the last few years remaining to him was Robert Yelverton Tyrrell, our friend of many years, who had humanities beyond the common in a college don. The famous classical scholar and fine wit had most gracious manners, with a delicious way of being lurid in speech if anything or any one displeased in a very slow, quiet voice, soft as velvet. Let me pay tribute to him and to Mrs. Tyrrell, to whom *Heart of a Girl* would most fittingly rhyme, and the warm hospitality of their house. Some few and blessed women have the gift of making home wherever they are. Mrs. Tyrrell had it, has it, to perfection ; and he was a most urbane and charming host. Just to think of the days and the evenings when we went up to lunch or to dine with the Tyrrells, and the warm, friendly house folded us in, is a delight in retrospect. ‘Alas,’ as Wesley said, of the glories of a great Irish house where he visited, ‘that all this must vanish like a dream !’ Certainly the gracious Irish hospitality is passing. There are not many houses like the Tyrrells’ now. The late Lord Grey’s daughter has made a happy summing-up phrase of a most gracious personality and good man. ‘He was always lighting fires in cold rooms.’ Blessed be the women like Ada Tyrrell, like Mary Gill, and others I have known, who create about their personality a warm room for the cold to come into and be made glad !

One day in the train some one told me that Mrs. Rowan Hamilton, who had just been on a visit to Lady Dufferin, had absolutely refused to eat the nice, light, digestible food prepared for her. She *would* eat curried lobster instead. ‘Oh, go and teach your grandmother to suck eggs !’ she said impatiently to some one who protested.

Occasionally we used to go to the very good concerts provided by Sir Stanley Cochrane at Woodbrook, Bray. Sometimes John Coates was of the singers and he would come over to us at Shankill afterwards and sing for us, song after song. He was an old London friend of my husband’s, but my first meeting with him was, I think, in

May 1913, when he and I and others were entertained by that very hospitable Dublin Club, the Corinthians. I had to go alone, since my husband had just lost a relative, and I was feeling rather strange when John Coates was brought up to me. ‘I’m all alone,’ I said desolately. ‘Oh no,’ he said, ‘never alone while you’ve got me !’

Are Yorkshiremen very like Irishmen ? He is. He sang us the Irish songs—‘At the Mid Hour of Night,’ I remember particularly—with the most passionate feeling. Unlike many singers he always has the feeling for the words, true artist that he is. He told us once that when he was a little boy and was very often brought forward to sing, his old aunt used to whisper to him : ‘Be sure to read the words first, Johnny. Always read the words first.’ He has profited by that excellent advice. He is just as fine a man as he is a singer, and that is to say a good deal. The last time I saw him he was in khaki which became him, and was using his beautiful voice in bidding men ‘Form Fours !’

At one of those concerts, which were very pleasant social affairs—you could get tea in the hall and talk to all your friends—I met Emily Lawless’s brother, a very gentle, refined-looking, elderly man. It was just after Miss Lawless’s death. He told me she had died in her sleep. The maid, entering her room in the morning and drawing up the blind, was struck by the rigidity of the sleeper, and approaching found her dead, wearing the utmost placidity of countenance. He spoke of her as ‘my dear’ and ‘my dear one.’ It was pleasant to know that she was so much loved.

One of the evenings A. E. dined with us he was fascinated, in his big, gentle way, by our tiny chocolate Pom, ‘Fritz,’ who has obstinately refused to answer to ‘Fred,’ or ‘Frederick.’ He said in a fantastic mood that Fritz was a wonderful little creature who ran about in splendid boughs in a magical forest. Pamela, who is the ‘mother’ of Fritz, said, ‘You know the secrets of animals. What does he think of us ? ’ A. E. answered : ‘He thinks we are all his gigantic slaves.’

When we went to Dublin we used to go to see A. E. and Susan Mitchell in the big room at the top of Plunkett House, with the wall-paintings. I remember how, long ago in his boyhood, A. E. had painted with such mystical beings the walls and ceiling of the Theosophical Society's rooms in Ely Place. What became of them? Does some one live amid their beauty and glitter, or have they peeled away like the Pre-Raphaelite decorations of the Union Rooms at Oxford, for want of a little care in preparing the walls? A. E. said his main reason for painting the walls was because he could not live with the ugly wall-paper. He is always painting out and repainting those lovely visions. He said to me one of those days: 'There are people born to do things, who would have done them under any circumstances. The man who wrote the *Jungle Book*, if he had been an Eastern, would have sat in the gates of Baghdad and told stories. I would have sat in the gates and made pictures. You would have made poems. There are other people who only do things because of their environment.'

The teas at Plunkett House were always a pleasant occasion. All the staff was to be found there, with visitors thrown in; and the most delicious Co-operative honey and cream and butter made the entertainment particularly good. But sometimes if the *Homestead* was late or difficult the editor had his tea upstairs. I found him once boiling water in a saucepan for his tea; and when I went shopping I sent him a kettle, without giving any indication of where it came from. On my next visit, in the midst of conversation, A. E. suddenly disappeared into a cupboard, from which presently he emerged with the kettle in his hand. He said nothing, only beamed at me over his beard, then looked down at the kettle with a question in his eyes.

Another day, much later, my Pam and Patrick were with A. E. when a gentleman arrived to whom, as a reviewer, I had given some hard smacks, which he had repaid in kind. Dear A. E. with his air of benediction waved the two youngsters towards the unfriendly

arrival. ‘These are Katharine Tynan’s son and daughter,’ he said, in his beautiful way of taking for granted that the introduction must be of interest and pleasure. The young people were getting off the scene at the moment, and I am quite sure that A. E. was and is blissfully unaware of any awkwardness.

All sorts of interesting people come into that room all day and every day. They are bidden enter by A. E. with a big benevolent roar. He gives audience all day long ; American editors and readers, young literary men and poets ; agricultural experts, men of action of one kind or another, politicians, lords, ladies, priests, and parsons come up those stairs. The last time I was there one of the most beautiful old men in the world came in ‘to give A. E. my blessing and to ask his.’ His only son had been killed at Suvla Bay. He has said the finest thing I know of all the splendid sayings of the war : ‘When my son sits down in Paradise I pray that the Turk who killed him may sit down beside him.’ One might well kneel to receive *his* blessing ; and A. E.’s would be good to have, but his face always radiates blessing. That day this beautiful old man, after he had been gone five minutes, came climbing the steep stairs again, with a message to our elder boy, who had been recommended for the Military Cross. ‘Tell him,’ he said, with his hand on my shoulder, ‘that I am as proud of him as though he were my own boy, *my own boy*.’

Many a young soldier came for A. E.’s blessing, though he is no militarist. He told me that he had never killed anything but a fish, once. He had not gone fishing again. Even yet, he said, the thought of the white belly turning upward had power to fill him with a queer horror.

I have never been in London, except once passing through when I saw no one, since we left it behind in December 1911. But I have kept touch through my letters and made new friends. My visit to Mr. Justice and Mrs. Ross in 1913 brought me into touch with Rose Macaulay who had been visiting them. Mr. Justice Ross lent me

her novel *The Lee Shore*, which had won the Thousand Guineas Prize in a Hodder and Stoughton competition. I must confess that I took the book with no great anticipations. I had an unfounded suspicion that a Prize Novel could not be a good novel from a literary point of view. The fact that a novel of my own, *Molly My Heart's Delight*—a somewhat painstaking study of Mrs. Delany and her times, not, I think, to be ranked among my ephemeræ—had not passed the weeder-out, did not influence my judgment, I think. Ever since *The Lee Shore* I have been making my apologies to the distinguished literary men who sat in judgment. Anything more unlike *The Way of an Eagle* or *The Rosary* than *The Lee Shore* cannot well be imagined. This delicate, humorous, gently satiric, tender book, like the others of Miss Macaulay's making, stands out as something most satisfying to the literary sense. These books say to the understanding mind, as Coleridge said to Wordsworth (or was it the other way about ?), 'Let us stand aside while this crowd goes by.' I wrote to Miss Macaulay to tell her how I loved *The Lee Shore*, and established a friendship with her which is added to by my friendship with her creatures. The Crevequers—those fascinating vagabonds who crop up again and again in Miss Macaulay's books—Peter of *The Lee Shore*, Benjy of *Views and Vagabonds*, all the other sweet, impracticable, humorous, delightful creatures walk the world with me since I have met them.

Another new friend of mine during those years was also a Prize Novel winner, with *The House of Lisronan*, Miss Miriam Alexander. I had not read the *House*, but I had read its successor, *The Port of Dreams*, and been greatly struck by it. Miss Alexander, now Mrs. Harold Stokes, lived in that bit of country lying under the Dublin mountains which was my girlhood's home and my Port of Dreams, every inch of it consecrated in my thoughts. She gave me tea one day at the Alexandra Club. While I waited for her—one always had to wait for her—I heard the conversation about me and thought it indi-

cated a nest of Unionist ladies, rooted in their convictions as only Irish Unionist ladies can be. If such are torn up by the roots and become Nationalists they are very extreme, as converts are apt to be. Miriam was then a little rebel in the sense that Jane Barlow and Emily Lawless were rebels. I have not seen her since rebellion took shape as a definite thing. It became her, as anything must become 'a dainty rogue in porcelain.' Even the Unionist ladies might have felt that

'If to her share some rebel errors fall,  
Look in her face and you forget them all.'

In those years I somehow lost Jane Barlow who had been my constant friend and correspondent for nearly twenty years. When we visited Ireland one of our first visits was always to her: our sympathies had been constant. She had always known about us, our children, our dogs, our gardens—how many cuttings and plants from the Cottage, Raheny, linger yet in the gardens of our various domiciles?—our griefs and joys. She once sent me pansies to cover a baby's grave. 'They are the most faithful of all the flowers,' she wrote. My first attempt to see her after we came back failed because of her father's serious illness. All of her that had been left by her mother's death in 1893 was absorbed in him. I had always known that when he died her life would be snapt off, although she might linger for a while. After his death she made no sign. I hardly expected it: I had known she would be struck down. Not long afterwards I heard she had come to live at Bray some four miles off. Still she made no sign, although I sent her messages. Later a chance meeting at a tea-party given by Miss Winifred Letts afforded me, I thought, the clue. I went up to Jane Barlow with warm pleasure in seeing her again. She was a little chilly. After a sentence or two she mentioned that she had found a want of reticence displeasing to her in my *Twenty-Five Years*, which had just been published. It was *very* unlike the Jane Barlow whose simple unselfconsciousness I had

admired when she gave me all I wanted about herself in the old days of 'Interviewing.' I never knew what had displeased her. The reference to herself was of the slightest.

Alas ! We never met again, although for a year and a half after that we were neighbours. I wrote when I heard of her illness, but she was beyond answering me.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE BEST OF FRIENDS

I HAVE purposely abstained from speaking of two whose influence in our lives was potent in those years, because I wanted to draw things together, and hitherto I have been very desultory, ranging over many people and happenings.

A year or two or three before we came back to Ireland I had had an invitation to a dinner which the Dublin Corinthian Club was giving to Irish women-writers. Unfortunately I was not able to accept that invitation, and so missed some of my sisters—a lost opportunity I shall always grieve for in the case of Martin Ross.

Lord Aberdeen, the then Viceroy, presided at the dinner, and Father Russell wrote to me a little later that he had learnt from Lady Gilbert, the friend of my early days, who had sat beside Lord Aberdeen at dinner, that His Excellency had displayed a most flattering interest in me. I had met Lady Aberdeen many years earlier, and had occasionally corresponded with her, but had never met Lord Aberdeen. When I saw Lady Gilbert she corroborated. She said, among other things, that when a speaker made a reference to some Irish writer who ought to be there, with complimentary intent, Lord Aberdeen always said: ‘Now he means Kate Tynan.’ His calling me ‘Kate’ was odd, for my father was the only one who ever did that.

I attached no significance to the report, thinking that it was perhaps a little overstated, out of the wish to please. However, it was quite, and fortunately, true that, as in the case of Lady Harrel, Lord Aberdeen had

a kindness for me before we met, only in his case there was the reason that he liked something of my writing.

Lord and Lady Aberdeen had been in Dublin in 1886 for a very brief Viceroyalty during the months before Gladstone's first Home Rule Bill was defeated and the Liberal administration fell with it. Lady Aberdeen had flung herself while she stayed, with characteristic and joyful energy, into social work, the Irish industries, work among the poor, and all such doings. They won the hearts of the people at all events, and they went out amid such manifestations of popular affection as had not happened since the departure of Lord Fitzwilliam, with the broken Charter of the Catholics in his hands, a hundred years earlier.

During the intervening twenty years, which covered a Viceroyalty in Canada, the memory of that send-off and the affection and admiration of the Irish people remained green with Lord and Lady Aberdeen. Lady Aberdeen had kept in touch with the Irish industries, revisiting Ireland at intervals during that time till, finally, they came back to the Viceregal Lodge in 1906, full of all sorts of plans for the benefit of the people they had learned to love.

A good deal of water had flowed under the bridges since 1886. The bonnie children who had won the praise and blessings of the crowd on that first coming had grown to manhood and womanhood. Youth, as a matter of years had passed by, but no boy and girl could have come with more eager hopefulness and young courage to the task of setting crooked things straight, than the new Viceroy and Lady Aberdeen.

Let me describe Lord Aberdeen briefly, as one who knows him intimately and honours and admires his beautiful character. He is the finest of fine gentlemen; perhaps almost too fine for the rough and tumble of life, certainly too clean, too high-minded for the unclean game of politics. He had sat at the feet of Mr. Gladstone who was his political idol. No one can say, even his enemies, that Gladstone did not play the game with

immense dignity. I remember once, at the Viceregal luncheon-table, I quoted Mr. Garvin : ‘When Gladstone is remembered as a splendid commonplace, Parnell’s star will be growing brighter and brighter.’ There was a gasp when I had said it. No one spoke. All eyes looked on their plates. ‘Well,’ I said, ‘I didn’t say it ; it was Mr. Garvin.’ Then every one laughed, including Lord and Lady Aberdeen, and the tension was ended.

From my first meeting with Lord Aberdeen in April 1912, shortly after our coming back, when we were bidden to an evening-party at Dublin Castle, he honoured me with his warm friendship, and I can honestly say that during this friendship, kept up by correspondence in absence, I have found no fault in him. He ought to have been the most popular of Irish Viceroys. His beautiful manners, his fine courtesy, his gracious ways, his gentle heart, might be taken for granted. What was not so much in evidence was what appeals to the Irish, for example, his skill with horses, a thing the Dublin crowd would have adored.

There was a time, while we lived in England, when the *Saturday Westminster* was giving a number of actual experiences of some kind or other. Our attention was arrested by a story of 1867, about the time the Fenians had attacked Chester Castle, when Mr. Gladstone had left Hawarden one night to visit the house of—was it the Marquis of Westminster—or the Earl of Crewe ?—I have forgotten; but it was one of the great Liberal persons. Every one was very anxious about the journey except Mr. Gladstone. Even Mrs. Gladstone did not suggest that it should not be undertaken. At the last moment there was a new cause for anxiety. The trusted coachman, who had so often driven Cæsar and all his fortunes, was suddenly taken ill. Mr. Gladstone was not apprised of the fact lest it should disturb him. I am not sure now that he was not to address a great political meeting after dinner. It was a dark night, but the journey was made in perfect safety, the ‘ pair ’ not seeming aware that a new hand was upon the reins. No Fenians appeared,

but the lackeys at the brilliantly lit doors of the great house were amazed to see Mr. W. H. Gladstone, who had occupied the box seat with the coachman, wait after his father and mother had entered for a whispered word and a warm handshake with the new coachman, who was no other than Mr. John Campbell Gordon, later to be Earl and Marquess of Aberdeen. Mr. Gladstone was not aware till the whole thing was safely over, when Mrs. Gladstone informed him of the identity of his very capable driver, who was then just twenty years of age.

It was Mrs. Drew who supplied this reminiscence, I believe. We were the first to tell Lord Aberdeen of its appearance in print.

The Dublin crowd, and Irishmen generally, are very susceptible to a gift of handling horses. One of Lord Aberdeen's A.D.C.'s, devoted to him as all his household was, lamented to us that he did not oftener display these special gifts. This A.D.C., Captain Hope, a tall, fair young officer of the Irish Guards, told us how, on the occasion of the International Football Match between Ireland and Scotland, which draws an enormous crowd, Lord Aberdeen arrived at the Lansdowne Road grounds himself driving a pair. There was a very narrow entrance-gate to be negotiated, barely an inch to spare at either side. The crowd watched with breathless interest. As the difficult feat was accomplished a great roar of applause went up. 'I wish he would do it oftener,' Captain Hope said, with a pucker of his candid forehead.

I repeated this to Lord Aberdeen, and he said : 'One of these days I will drive you out with the pair.' But that never came off.

Lady Aberdeen has remained incurably young and optimistic. She came back to Ireland with the gracious and generous intention not only of working for the people, but of reconciling conflicting forces and healing animosities. She has a heart for any fate. Possessing great personal fascination and unbounded courage and hopefulness, she did not despair of, she was rather

optimistic about, reconciling the irreconcilables. On the one hand she gathered about her the Catholics and Nationalists, often with a democratic ignoring of classes. In these countries it is very hard to find the true spirit of Democracy which so abounds in France. Lady Aberdeen, a woman of rank herself, came very near to being the true Democrat, only—I don't think people would presume on the democratic spirit too much, for she is *grande dame* to even the most careless eye. Some one described her to me once as an autocrat-democrat, and I thought it a very just description.

On the other hand, she strove to win the Unionist ladies, who looked very much askance at the Home Rule Viceroy and his Consort. To Lady Aberdeen's lovers, of whom I am one, there must be always something poignant in the faith and hope, the young confidence, with which she came to an impossible task.

In the case of Lord Aberdeen I think he must have won any one who came near enough to him. He has the ideal qualities. It was once said to me : ' If he has a fault it is that he gives himself up too much to the finer emotions.' People said when he did simple and charming things, that he should remember he represented the King. It was not easy for him to remember the obligation, which some Viceroys have observed in the letter rather than the spirit, when it was a question of courtesy to a woman or gentleness to a child. I remember once when an inconsiderate girl-guest at the Vice-regal Lodge discovered at the last moment, with the motor standing at the door and not a seat to spare, that she must really change her mind and go into Dublin. Lord Aberdeen immediately gave up his seat to her and took the seat beside the chauffeur, which would, of course, have horrified the sticklers for royal etiquette.

I remember a very cold night too, when we went back with him from a concert at the Royal Hospital to the Viceregal Lodge, and stopped at the Kingsbridge Station to set down there one of the performers. Lord Aberdeen insisted on his taking the rug for his railway

journey, although it left himself rugless. In the same way he would wait on a woman, would step out of a carriage or motor and help her to alight, saving her skirt from the wheels—such little offices as perhaps a king does not render a subject, but of the essence of kingliness all the same.

There is a story told of an Irish viceroy who stood so much on his dignity that he would not pick up a lady's handkerchief when she dropped it. His very beautiful young sister-in-law waited till she got him on the other side of the Channel. Then she dropped many things and insisted on his picking them up. 'You are not Lord-Lieutenant here, you know!' she said triumphantly.

Well, it would have been impossible for Lord Aberdeen to let a woman pick up her own handkerchief. Attachment was very easy when one got near enough to him. Deena Tyrrell said to me after a day when she had lunched at the Viceregal Lodge—I think it must have been the first occasion of her seeing Lord Aberdeen at close quarters : 'He is so sweetly bent on making you feel that there is no distance between you and him that you feel it all the more.' It was eloquent from a Tyrrell who was as far removed from undue humility as from anything approaching snobbery. Lady Aberdeen also had won Deena Tyrrell's heart by the beauty and goodness of an address to her girl-guests at a May-Day party.

Sometimes Lady Aberdeen had American visitors. I think she was a little taken in by 'hustle' and 'hot air.' Anyhow, she has always been partial to America and Americans, whose energy she greatly admires. Some of the American visitors were a great trial to the most hustling of the A.D.C.'s, a pink-cheeked, golden-moustached young man whom some people found very alarming. It was a cosmopolitan, very easy circle that surrounded the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland in those days, for Lady Aberdeen's helpers and workers were to be found side by side with aristocratic and distinguished visitors. None, I think, ever presumed. The divinity

that doth hedge a king was very much to be felt in the case of Lord and Lady Aberdeen, despite their simplicity and friendliness. But some of the American and Colonial ladies would *not* observe, perhaps did not know, the etiquette. They *would* go out of the room before Lady Aberdeen. They *would* omit the curtsy to the Viceroy. It was really amusing to watch the nonchalant air with which some of these ladies, coming late to lunch in defiance of all the laws, would receive the Viceroy's amiable anxiety on their account. These lapses used to cause the golden young A.D.C. untold anguish. He was devoted to their Excellencies. I am sure he often wanted to set the offenders right by pure force, and would have done it if it were possible.

Captain Hope—the first of the A.D.C.'s of those years to be killed in the war—had, his mother wrote to me afterwards, an unbounded admiration for the characters of the lady and gentleman he served. His desire was to model his life so far as possible on theirs, and his simple dream was that he might some day write a book in which their work and ideals should be set forth to the world.

Lady Aberdeen was devoted to good works. The Irish Celt usually dislikes and distrusts good works—he has suffered so much from them at the hands of the Anglo-Irish. It may have been difficult for him to imagine that there could be real sympathy for him apart from the benevolence which so often desired to reform him and lead him to better things, as the reformer saw them. In the good works of the Anglo-Irish there lurks, or may lurk, a core of controversy. A charity which should be charity in its true sense, that is to say, Love and Love alone, without design of teaching their recipient the error of his ways, was something of a new thing in his experience. The poor, at least, were soon persuaded that here was love without controversy.

Lady Aberdeen lived in the midst of work for one good cause or another. She took up a campaign against consumption in Ireland. I see the fruits of it every day

in this wild, western country, where the people live with open windows despite the wind and the rain, because Lady Aberdeen taught them to do it. Another crusade of hers was for the children. Many people might be scandalised at the spectacle of her Excellency romping with slum children at a haying party, with the enjoyment of a child. I confess that she never was so excellent to my eyes as when she played with children, poor children, her arms full of them, in the hay on a summer day.

Her feeling for childhood was something very delightful. I told her once about a growing girl who could not be detached from the cot-eiderdown of her babyhood because she had talked to the flowers of the pattern and made stories about them in the long, light mornings before grown-up people were awake. Her smile had all tender humour in it.

Her works were really endless. The Women's National Health Association, of which she was President, covered all manner of activities : the provision of Sanatoria, of Prevention Homes, of After Care Committees : there was the supply of pure milk to the Dublin babies : the Babies' Clubs, where the mothers brought their babies and themselves weekly to receive medical advice, and had instruction sweetened by a good tea and a talk in a warm, well-lit room. There was the Blue Bird Van which used to distribute health literature up and down the country : there was the crusade for clean homes and decent conditions of living. There was no end to the activities. Not the least blessed aspect of these works was that they gathered in women from the stagnant life of the country towns to work for the common good. The immense capacity for work of such women in Ireland is terribly unorganised. As Lord Macaulay wrote, the Irish Catholics lost their natural leaders when the Catholic gentlemen left the country after the broken Treaty of Limerick and took service in the armies of France, Austria, and Spain. The wife of the local magnate in Ireland is usually alien in creed and politics

from the people she ought to lead. So she stands aloof, and then all the small social differences come into play. One is reminded of the American lady who declined to see the most magnificent of Durbars because she was 'not going to curtsey to Mary Leiter.'

One of the many off-shoots of the W.N.H.A. was the Irish Goat Society. It used to hold a little meeting of its own, side by side with the General Meetings of the W.N.H.A. : perhaps I am wrong to say it was an off-shoot, it may have run concurrently. I once went to a meeting of the Irish Goat Society with the intention of buying a goat, or at least receiving advice on the subject of buying a goat. The meeting on that occasion numbered only one man to several ladies. Certainly two of the ladies, at least—one old—were extremely well worth looking at. I thought they would like to know that I wanted to buy a goat, and perhaps I was rather forward in mentioning it. They looked at me with rather a grieved air ; and the beautiful *young* lady said she thought they had better take the business first. I retired to a back seat and consoled myself by looking at the beautiful old lady—I think she was Miss Spring Rice. My time was rather short, and the Irish Goat Society seemed to have 'worlds enough and time' for anything. Two or three times I tried to say that I wanted to buy a goat, and was gently but firmly repressed. 'We shall write to you on the subject,' said the beautiful young lady, who was, I believe, a niece of the beautiful old lady.

Then I departed sadly, turning my mind to consider the claims of the common goat.

I told this experience to Lady Aberdeen afterwards. She said : 'My dear Mrs. Hinkson, what *were* you thinking of ? The Irish Goat Society to sell a goat ! Why, it is the very last thing they would think of !'

I went to a good many meetings of her Excellency's during those years. She had no understudy, nobody could take her place. The meetings were dull and dead without her. As soon as she arrived it was like the

Palace of the Sleeping Beauty. Everything that had been dead and dusty came alive : the clock had struck, and all was life and energy.

One of the expeditions we made with Lord Aberdeen was to Peamount, the Sanatorium for Consumption. It was a bright, fresh February day. I remember that on the way we ran over a dog—not badly evidently, because he made so much noise. I think, indeed, the car only grazed him. Captain Hope, who was in attendance, went off to make inquiries, but it was not enough for Lord Aberdeen. He had to go himself to see if the dog was hurt—just the thing the conventional Viceroy would not have done. I do not know if the dog's owners recognised the Lord-Lieutenant. Anyhow they refused compensation, saying it would teach him to give up rushing at motors.

At Peamount I was not allowed to enter the buildings. I stood in the doorway of one of the wards in the draught between door and windows, while Lord Aberdeen sat beside the bed of a dying child talking to her as tenderly as a father. That too was unlike the conventional Lord-Lieutenant.

Those were the days of the Militant Suffragette, over whom we were very much excited. The lady was always in evidence more or less. She had magnificent courage, and she was often very scurvily treated. One evening when we were driving back to the Viceregal Lodge from somewhere or other in the winter dusk, there was, or there was supposed to be, a Suffragette waiting to heckle the Viceroy. Lord Aberdeen was in anguish lest she should be roughly handled. One of those days Mr. Asquith came to Dublin. There was, or there was supposed to be, an attempt to set the Theatre Royal, where one of his big meetings was to be held, on fire. A Dublin editor said to me : 'Good God ! Last night women were hunted like rats through the streets of Dublin !

I told this to Lord Aberdeen and he was dreadfully distressed. Later on one of the ladies who had been a hunger-striking Suffragette—I use the commonly

accepted word, which I dislike—told me that nothing could exceed his anxious kindness and concern for them when they were in prison. She had been one of the hunted that night, when there was a very indiscriminate hunting. She said that she was glad to find herself in the hands of the police, and did not much care where they were taking her to, so long as she was safe from those terrible hunters. There were terrible elements in what looked like being a sex war at that time, terrible possibilities of degradation and cruelty. That is one of the things the war has delivered us from.

Despite her preoccupation with many charities and her way of turning night into day, there was, there is, something extraordinarily comfortable about Lady Aberdeen. She, too, is of the women who make home wherever they are. The hospitality of the Viceregal Lodge overflowed to the meetings over which she presided. There was always a delicious tea during the sittings of the W.N.H.A. at Ely House : and the General Meeting had a fine lunch provided for its two or three hundred attendants. Even if you were kept up to the small hours at the Viceregal Lodge, even if dinner was occasionally postponed till eleven o'clock, one never minded. One was steeped in an atmosphere of warm comfort and kindness.

## CHAPTER XIII

### ROME

THE Shadow was now almost at the point of blotting out the sun. In April, 1914, I met Mrs. Murrough O'Brien driving, and she stopped to speak to me. Somehow or other I complained that I had never travelled—I had been held up by so many things during the years when I ought to have travelled ; I did not suppose I ever should now.

‘Ah, well,’ she said consolingly, ‘I dare say the opportunity is on its way. Sometimes a door is opened very suddenly.’

A few days later, on the 27th April 1914, a door was opened. I received a letter from Lady Aberdeen, who was going to Rome to the Quinquennial Meeting of the International Congress of Women, of which she was president. She asked me if I would go with her.

Well, of course, it was a most wonderful door. I confess I was rather frightened of it. To go out on that splendid adventure, unaccompanied by one member of my own family, who have guarded and kept my purblind way so that I must never go alone anywhere, fairly daunted me. But, of course, I said I would go. I knew it was a splendid door, though I looked through it with absolute terror.

I lunched at the Viceregal Lodge on Tuesday, the 29th, when arrangements were made for the journey, and left Dublin on the night of April 30th.

Never did any one approach a great adventure with such a chilly heart as I did. It was not bettered by some one telling me as we waited at a dark railway station on the night before I left Dublin, that dear Father

Gilbert Dolan was dead. He had been dead nearly a month, and we had not known. The loneliness of his going, without one word of farewell to us, to whom and our children he was tenderly attached, added to my loneliness.

It was my own fault that I did not travel with Lady Aberdeen, who has a panacea against loneliness and fearfulness, instead of with one of her A.D.C.'s, Captain Roger Bellingham, and his young wife. She was sending them before her, with her usual exquisite consideration, because Mrs. Bellingham had had a long illness in the preceding winter, and she must not be tired by the rapid journey she herself was prepared to make. I believe I suggested going with the Bellinghams from a really humble thought that I might be a trouble to her or in her way.

It was a lost opportunity I have never ceased to regret. The young couple, mere boy and girl, could have done very well without my companionship. Some one said to me, ' You should have travelled with her Excellency. She is so considerate. You would not have minded the rush through—with her.'

I should not : it would have been beautiful, and I should have forgotten to be lonely.

Just before we left the North Wall Station that night a Viceregal messenger arrived with little baskets for Mrs. Bellingham and me. I forget what was in her basket. In mine were early strawberries, with a little packet of castor sugar inscribed in Lord Aberdeen's writing. It was *so* like him.

It was a cold night-journey. The next morning we were in London. It was the first of May and May had come to London, London of the pre-war days, more enchantingly clean and fresh and fair than she comes to the country.

It was very warm and the watering-carts were out. One side of the streets was buried in deep cool shadow ; the other side had the sun. The West End window-boxes showed gold and white daisies with long trails

of greenery. The first leafage was on the black boughs, a sudden wonder of green light. There were stacks of flowers by the pavements. Every boy carrying a basket whistled. The country wind blew down all the westward-looking streets. It was London's moment of all the year. I was seeing it, though I did not know, as I should never see it again.

Augustine Henry, now Professor of Forestry in the Royal College of Science in Dublin after many years spent in China, whose talk is golden, for he has stranger and more fascinating things to tell than any other talker I remember, said to me once that the English made the best travellers in the world. He excluded the trippers. I was to realise that on my journey. We stayed the night in Paris, saw some sights the next day, and went on in the afternoon by the Paris-to-Rome Express. It was the very last day of its running for that season, and I suppose its very last trip until it is resurrected, if it is, after the war. We had come through that quiet land of the rivers and waterways which in a few short months would be the battlefield of the Marne. And now we left Paris behind and rushed away down south, the air growing warmer every moment. The train was full of German Jews, who sat in the corridors in reclining-chairs and grunted when they had to rise to let you pass. The little gimcrack train-de-luxe, with all its gilding and mirrors, seemed a proper setting for them. I shared a washing-arrangement with a couple of them, and it was paralysing, when one opened the looking-glass door, to see some one else opening the other looking-glass door of communication with their carriage. I don't know how many times I retreated hastily and bolted my door before I discovered that I was frightened of my own image.

We went through the Alps in the night, so I had to wait for the return journey for that wonder—I had seen nothing higher than the Welsh and Irish mountains. But about four o'clock in the morning I awoke and realised that I was in Italy. I got up, and very reverently knelt,

before I drew up the blind. I had to see Italy for the first time on my knees. (I don't suppose there was much kneeling, except to Plutus, in that little fast-flying Paris-to-Rome Express.) But there was nothing, save a thick golden mist under which Italy lay hidden.

However, it was nice to get up so early and have my washing out of the way before the plutocrats were ready—if they washed. I sat by the window all the morning, while the mist lifted and I saw the land which has all mankind for lovers. After breakfast I spent the morning hours in the Bellinghams' little carriage, where the young wife sewed a baby's frock, and the young husband wrote letters, now and again looking up, with a smile, to tell me something of the places we were passing through. We were running along the Gulf of Genoa. There was something light and bright, almost like a spiritual atmosphere, in the little carriage. The Mediterranean was so blue and the sky so blue, the olive-trees so dark, and the white buildings on their heights so dazzlingly white, that it was all as though the world had come new from God's hands. Presently I discovered that we were passing the scenes of the young people's honeymoon. The writing and the sewing were put down, while they discovered this and that remembered spot. Looking at them one would have said the auguries were all propitious. Yet Roger Bellingham had barely ten months to live, and the anniversary of the day we started on the glorious holiday the young widow was listening to her husband's panegyric at his Memorial Service.

We had no prevision of these things. It was a most wonderful journey. I have always counted it as a mercy of the good God that I should have made it, seeing things in the undisturbed Peace which had taken so many golden years to build. One day during that happy time in Rome, the Women's Congress sat in deliberation at the British Embassy upon the question of how best to celebrate the Hundred Years of Peace between England and America, which should be arrived at in 1915. I do not

know what was the result of the deliberation. I was in the garden. I usually was in the garden, or somewhere else, when the Congress was in deliberation. Rome in May 1914 was far too wonderful a thing to my unaccustomed eyes for me to spend the time in the hot and crowded rooms where her Excellency sat so patiently, hour after hour, bearing with cranks and wild women with an infinite toleration.

I shall not inflict upon the reader, who knows all about Rome, anything but my Personalia. I met my first good English traveller as I sat in the garden of that bright and clean caravanserai, the Hotel Quirinal, on the first day after arrival, which happened to be Sunday. I was not up to the strenuous sight-seeing and visiting of the young couple, who were so eager that it seems, looking back, as though unconsciously they knew that there was not much time. As I sat down to my solitary tea in the garden there came this good traveller, one of those English country ladies, honest, and with something of a hard-bitten, sporting look, as though they were used to the wind and the weather, as straight-going and well-bred as their own horses ; the kind of woman who can go anywhere, her coat-of-mail her own unconscious fearlessness. She was the daughter of a Warwickshire baronet, the possessor of a beautiful name, and she was on her way to join her father and mother at Athens, travelling, I think, without even a maid. Probably she was not more than twenty-eight, or perhaps not so much ; but she would not look a day older at thirty-eight. To my solitary table, where I sat very lonely and very shy, she came, suggesting that we should have tea together. I joyfully agreed, and afterwards she took me sight-seeing, through the crowded Sunday streets, with all the colours of the women's dresses and head-dresses, the vivacious Southern faces, the beautiful soldiers and sailors, the friars, the ecclesiastics of one kind or another—all very wonderful to me. After two or three hours together she brought me back to my hotel, bade me a friendly farewell, and passed away

into the void. Wherever she may be, brave, kind, and capable, I send her my love, and pray the war may have spared her dearest belongings, although I know she would have risen to anything that might befall.

We had been almost the first to arrive of those connected with the Congress, but on Saturday the hotel began to be like the Tower of Babel. By Monday it was quite like. All sorts of unknown tongues were to be heard in the corridors and rooms of the hotel. Beaming faces met one everywhere. The delegates were in holiday and sisterly mood. I was embraced by many ladies as I went up and down the stairs. ‘Ah me! we met last at Stockholm,’ or Berlin, or somewhere else. It was said in English, or I conjectured it in the unknown tongue. After a few disclaimers I gave up saying it was my first Congress, and that I was not official. So many of them remembered me perfectly, and were so pleased to see me again.

The last trace of loneliness vanished with Lady Aberdeen’s coming on the Monday morning. Before I had seen her a lady very well known in Rome, Mrs. Marian Mulhall, had come in and carried me off to a semi-private Audience with the Pope. I was not like to be lonely once Mrs. Mulhall had taken kind possession of me. She represented Argentina at the Congress. She was known in Rome as the Queen of Patagonia, and I believe she was the first woman who had navigated the Amazon river.

At the Vatican there was a small, select Bavarian Pilgrimage. I saw the big Pilgrimage later at an open-air Audience in the Cortilo di St. Angelo. They were charming, those Bavarian women—I remember nothing of the men—with their grave, pure faces under the mantilla. We did our Audience very thoroughly, and then Mrs. Mulhall, who was nothing if not energetic, carried me off to present me to Cardinal Merry del Val. I had been somewhat oppressed by the heat, the splendour, the hothouse atmosphere of the Vatican, all the officialdom revolving about a simple old man, who

looked like an Irish parish priest, except for some strange radiance, which one could not ascribe only to the whiteness of his garments. He was even then in weak health, so that the Audiences were much curtailed. I was not surprised—the poor old Holy Father, who had come from the sea-breezes of his beloved Venice to this stifling great palace. Perhaps, after all, those marble halls would be stone-cold, like the Roman churches, without artificial heat. Cardinal Merry del Val had a breezy, British manner, as though he waived the kissing of his ring and offered you a hearty British handshake instead.

After that I saw the Holy Father many times, but never in private Audience, though several kind people were anxious to procure me that privilege. I was alarmed of it, the more because of how greatly I should have appreciated it : but many prelates and monsignore sent me orders for public and semi-public Audiences : I had them to spare. Once it was known, I was besieged. Ladies from the Antipodes came to me : ‘ Just think of the thousands and thousands of miles we have come, and are we not to see the Holy Father after all ? ’ they pleaded, almost, or quite with tears. I don’t think the Vatican altogether approved of the Congress, orthodox as it was so far as the British and other sections were concerned. The Congress had hoped, I think, for some recognition : I am sure many good Catholic members had prayed for it : but it did not come. I was fortunate in being able to take relays of ladies who must have gone away else without seeing the Pope : and it was then I discovered how many non-Catholic, English people had a Catholic member of their family. I always went supplied with rosaries for the Pope’s blessing, and the heartfelt gratitude of the Protestant ladies, who had not known of such a thing, when I presented them with a rosary to hold up for blessing was really touching.

We went to all sorts of functions, official, semi-official, and private. Once it was a garden-party at Queen Margharita’s palace, where one saw how beautiful the ladies of the Italian aristocracy are. They extin-

guished the colder northern beauty. We were presented, each in turn to the Queen, who gave us the most beautiful roses, accompanied by gracious, murmured words that were like roses. I missed being presented to the royal poet as an Irish poet, and so receiving special honour, as Lady Aberdeen had designed, by not awaiting my turn. I went with the Dutch ladies. We were entertained at the Villas, at Tivoli and Frascati. There were no end to banquets and garden-parties, and all sorts of gay happenings.

The day we were at Queen Margharita's garden-party our coming and going was overlooked from a window of the Quirinal Palace by the beautiful, dark-eyed Queen Elena and her lovely children. Not that I could see them, but I was told they were there. Lady Aberdeen, fresh from being received by the Queen, told us at a quiet dinner in her own apartments, at which I and Mrs. Forbes of Rothiemay, who had taken me under her wing, were the only guests, about her visit. Queen Elena had told her that she was the eldest of nine children. When her youngest brother was born her mother was very ill, and her father came to her with the baby brother and placed him in her arms. 'Here is a baby for you, Elena,' he said. 'Your mother will have nothing to do with him. He is entirely yours.' So the Princess Elena went to the hospital at Cettinje and trained as a doctor, the better to rear her baby brother. The staff of the Quirinal Palace counted then about seven hundred, and every morning between seven and nine o'clock any one who was ill was free to come and be seen and prescribed for by the doctor-Queen. The morning of Lady Aberdeen's visit, the Queen said she had not slept well and had wakened very tired, wishing that she might stay in bed, but she got up all the same to look to her household.

The royal children were devoted to animals and were allowed to have any pets they pleased. Among them were two miniature donkeys who wandered all over the Palace. The children expected their mother to notice

their pets and praise them, and when she forgot they would tell the animal sadly : ‘ Never mind, Bébé, Mama passes you by. She is not aware that you wish her to notice you, to speak to you. She is not really cruel.’

As President of the Women’s Congress, Lady Aberdeen was far less approachable by the general run of people than she was in Ireland. She never entered the public rooms. She was indeed a queen. I loved those special occasions when I saw her quietly, beyond functions where I walked purblind, amid the

‘ Blank misgivings of a creature  
Moving about in worlds not realised.’

There was another delightful informal occasion when a Canadian lady, who was a great friend of Lady Aberdeen’s and often entertained for her, gave a lunch to some of the Colonial ladies, and the table was smothered in the wonderful Roman roses. I sat on her Excellency’s right hand and was made much of, as she knows how to do it, and the Colonial ladies were so kind and pleasant and remembered, or pretended to remember, the books I had written.

Sometimes I was extraordinarily adventurous, considering that I could not see beyond my own nose. I went shopping with but one word to negotiate with : ‘ Quanto ?’ Generally the purchase was carried out by a cheerful pantomime : but once I was most dreadfully stuck over an attempted purchase of rose-water. I asked for Eau-de-Rose. There were at least twenty assistants trying to make out what I meant, and bringing me everything I didn’t want. The legend ‘ English Spoken ’ was on every shop window ; but I never found any one who spoke English.

One Sunday I went off by myself, immediately after *déjeuner*, when all the English-speaking people went out in the blazing sun and the Romans retired to the siesta, to visit an archbishop and a monsignor. I believe I took the latter first. He was the purple patch in the life of a family of good and kind Irish Protestants who

were our friendly neighbours at Shankill. To them we owe the inimitable Fritz. Long, long ago their cousin had become a Catholic, and had somehow come to be a count and a monsignor. Of course they did not know that monsignore are common objects of the countryside in Rome. The kind, Irish Protestant papa, who *might* have been cursing the Pope if he were not too well-mannered, mentioned with pride to the Irish Catholic children that he had a cousin at Rome who belonged to the Pope's household and was a monsignor and a count, who prayed for him every day at Mass. That romantic figure revolutionised the whole outlook of the Irish Protestant family. The Protestant papa used to say broad-mindedly that there was a good deal to be said for the Pope, and that, for his part, he respected him. Well, they deserved their purple patch.

When I went to Rome I had to see this romantic figure and report on him to the Irish Protestant family to whom he was a hidden joy and romance—a light, a rose in their lives, of which the drab world knew nothing. So off I went all alone, in one of the little Roman carriages which carries, or carried, you a great distance for one lira. Baedeker said that the Italians were very fond of tips and always expected one. He omitted to say that a very tiny tip pleased them extravagantly. I suppose there must have been many visitors to Rome who did not tip, for I always noticed the gloomy apprehension gather on the face of my driver till it sat like a thundercloud on his brow at the end of the journey. When I presented him with the equivalent of twopence, Heavens, what a change! Nods and becks and wreathed smiles are nothing to express it. He threw his cap in the air, he all but embraced me.

I had not a word of Italian when I set out to find the Count de Raimond. I just handed his visiting-card to the driver, and off we started; I upheld by the thought of what a commotion it would cause in my family if they could but see me. We arrived at the house. It was a high house with an open staircase, a porter's lodge

inside the entrance. My driver handed me over to a small boy who came out of the porter's lodge, explaining to him what I wanted. The small boy gave me instructions in Italian which I pretended to understand, and I obeyed his pointed finger and went up the stairs. On each floor three or four high doors confronted me, each with a name above it, which I could not read. I went up and up. Then I became alarmed at the strangeness and silence. Supposing one of those doors should open and a terrible face appear! I went downstairs again stealthily, and waited at the top of the first flight of steps for a while, intending to appear as though I *had* found the Monsignor at home and made my call.

I did not deceive that small boy. At the sound of my returning footsteps, he came in from a conversation with my driver—seized me, and as the children say in Ireland ‘hooshed’ me upstairs again—it means as though one drove chickens—stopped me at the proper door, and never left me till I was face to face with the Monsignor.

He was a dear little kindly old man. When my family reported what I had said of him to the kind Protestant papa, he was terribly dashed. ‘Old man?’ he repeated, ‘but—’ I think they had thought of him as something splendid and young.

Next I saw the Archbishop. The little boy of the porter's lodge and the driver had evidently discussed me. The latter only shrugged his shoulders when I declined to alight at the foot of a flight of steps leading to a flagged terrace in front of the archiepiscopal abode, and drove a few further yards, which brought me up with a flourish at the door. I wonder what he and the small boy said about me.

The Archbishop—a French-Canadian—gave me tea, and filled my arms with roses, more than I could carry. We walked in his garden where we picked the roses. He was so kind and simple that he was really worth that adventure.

Another morning, before I had discovered Margreita Beer to take me to Mass, I stood looking out at the

pouring rain, not a conveyance to be seen—and between me and Santa Maria del Angeli the immense square of the Terminus, as daunting as Trafalgar Square, with an equal flow of a more reckless traffic, to say nothing of trams added. Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon, a distinguished Scottish delegate, came down the stairs while I stood in the hall. I would not give myself away for worlds ; it is a thing I have always hated to do, but perhaps distress was in my attitude.

‘ Now what do you want to do ? ’ she asked.

‘ I want to get to Mass, and I shall have to cross that awful square, where I shall certainly be run down.’

‘ Wait a moment.’

She hurried away and came back in waterproofs, and, good Scottish Presbyterian as she was, she took me across the square into the church, planted me before an altar where a priest was just going to say Mass, whispered to me to remember the steps inside the door as I came out, and to *drive* back—all the little carriages would be out by that time—and so left me.

I did remember the steps as I came out ; but there was not a trace of a little carriage. I stood a moment helplessly gazing at the maelstrom into which I must plunge to get back to the Quirinale. Then I caught sight of a lady about to cross—with a profile delicate as a cameo—one of the lovely Italians who might pose for the Madonna any day. I explained, or tried to explain in what French I could muster. She nodded as though to say she understood, took my hand and drew it through her arm, and we plunged.

She held me tightly till she had placed me within the revolving cage which admitted to the hotel, then patted my hand with her own and went off.

A little lady from Finland, who was a delegate, had travelled with a broken leg. She said she had been carried across half Europe by good Samaritans. She missed nothing of the Congress either, not its business nor its gaieties. Ah, well, the world is full of good Samaritans, if one has need of them.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE UNTRAVELED TRAVELLER

THERE was an evening when there was a very big function, at the Hall of the University, I think. I had gone with her Excellency's Canadian friend and Mrs. Forbes and a Jewish lady whose name I have forgotten. Entering the Hall they were swept from me by the crowd. The trouble was that no one ever knew *how short-sighted* I was, so that it was almost blindness so far as regarded faces. It was appalling to find myself in a crowd, talking all the tongues under Heaven I did not know, and not one word of English anywhere. I attached myself to a group and a nation with which I had nothing to do and resolutely refused to be detached, though they were very particular about it, as they were all sitting in sections and countries and wanted my chair, which, having achieved I stuck to.

Doubtless they would have dislodged me, but I was saved by Chrystal MacMillan, the redoubtable Suffrage lady who had pleaded the cause of the woman barrister for three hours before the House of Lords some years earlier. I am not surprised that the House of Lords listened. She was very good to look at, even if she had not come as a deliverer, a splendid-looking creature with nobly waving hair just touched with grey, steel-blue eyes, and the rosy beauty of the Scotswoman which appears lightly touched with the sparkle of frost. Anything wholesomer than that beauty could not well be imagined. She was like a clean north wind if it had no sting in it, and she looked honest as the day. She towered in height, and when one walked with her in the streets of

Rome small Italian men used to turn and follow at an admiring distance.

She saved me that time, but presently she went away to speak, and I saw her no more. But I was seen if I did not see, and Mrs. Forbes retrieved me. It was spilling rain when we emerged from the Hall; the Jewish lady went off in search of a cab, while Mrs. Forbes wondered how she was to save her beautiful ostrich feathers if we had to make a rush for the tram, which was some distance off.

While we stood under the portico a carriage drew up and received three occupants. Some one called out that there was one place, and Mrs. Forbes was whisked away, calling back to me to stay where I was till the Jewish lady returned.

Well, that was easier said than done. We had left the Hall before the end of the last speech. Suddenly, while I stood there, all the doors were opened and out came the flood, in which I was swept off my feet. I could not hear one word of English nor see a face I knew, and panic took me with the thought of being left in the streets of Rome at midnight, with no language in which to explain my difficulties, not knowing in what direction my hotel lay nor how to get there.

At my worst moment I was suddenly seized by the man who had driven us to the Hall and placed in the interior of the carriage. *What* a relief it was to be in that safety out of the seething polyglot crowd! He had climbed to the box again to wait for the rest of his cargo. How beautiful was his stolid square back as I saw it through the glass, feeling so secure in my haven of refuge. To me came a party of American ladies.

'Why, here's a carriage with room for three or four or five; only one person in it.'

I beat them off with my hands, explaining that the carriage was engaged. They were persuaded with difficulty. Then they tried a compromise. 'Well, if you won't let us go in, you go right to that street away there till you meet with a cab and send it back for us.'

I refused to budge. Then they thought of another possibility.

' You just take us in and carry us right down there to the street-cars.'

I sat tight and they went off at last.

I am conscious that these tales suggest a rather fearful form of enjoyment, but they were sandwiched in between all sorts of delights. It was no fault but my own that I never said how blind I was, and it was my own misfortune that I had no languages.

There was a Sunday morning when Mrs. Mulhall gave a breakfast at her hotel in honour of Lady Aberdeen. It was a very memorable breakfast. There were three cardinals, Bourne, Farley, and Vicenzo Vanutelli; the Heads of the English, Irish, and Scottish Colleges; various ministers and their wives; and others—altogether a very distinguished company. Cardinal Vanutelli was magnificent in his scarlet robes. Very tall, full of gesture and animation, with a swift, rushing air, he looked the old Roman aristocrat to the life. The English and American cardinals were all simplicity. I had known Cardinal Bourne of old. Our first meeting was at St. Edmund's College, Ware, on a Speech Day when the boys performed a Greek play. I was to have had the seat beside the Cardinal at lunch, but a breakdown of our motor kept us late. After we had had a belated lunch we were guided through the dark auditorium to our seats. Some one said close beside me: ' How are you ? ' I answered, ' Very well, thank you, how are you ? ' A little later I discovered it was the Cardinal, whose simple sincerity and real goodness have come to their own during the war.

I sat on a sofa with Cardinal Farley, kind, simple, and fatherly. He had helped me when an American Catholic paper had 'lifted' my stories, making them make restitution, which they did most unwillingly and ungraciously. I had his kindness, at least, when an American Catholic review had found a poem of mine unorthodox and had left nothing unsaid in the way of

disparagement of me. These two prelates were delightful contrasts in their good simplicity to the splendour, as of the old Roman patrician, of Cardinal Vanutelli. But I have never found the high ecclesiastics of the Catholic Church lacking in that simple humanity.

I have somewhere one of the little scarlet cardinal's hats that marked the places of the cardinals at Mrs. Mulhall's *déjeuner*, with Queen Margharita's card of invitation, and the blue ribbon and inscription that confined her roses. Also I have a visiting card of Cardinal Merry del Val's. I found it in my place at the hall bureau one day, and straightway sent it home in the letter I was about to write. A little later Roger Bellingham came to me : 'Mrs. Hinkson, did you see a card left by Cardinal Merry del Val for her Ex. ?' 'I thought it was for me and I have sent it home.' He giggled : 'You'd better tell her Ex.' So I went upstairs, knocked at the door of her Excellency's suite, and was bidden enter. When I confessed she pealed her merry girlish laughter. 'I'm so glad,' she said, 'if it will give them pleasure at home.'

That Sunday of the *déjeuner* was our last day in Rome. It was becoming very hot. The windows of the big hall where the meetings were held had to be closed because of the noise in the streets. I used to wonder how Lady Aberdeen endured it. Others used to get out at intervals into the open air. She sat through the morning and afternoon sittings, always perfectly patient, courteous, and considerate.

I wrote eleven articles about the Congress, but I did not sit through those meetings. Every morning a charming girl steward, with the delightful name of Lydia Scuderi, used to set me a comfortable chair just within the glass screen, supply me with a table, pens, ink, and paper. She did it unweariedly right through to the end, dear thing ! I never stayed beyond ten minutes. It was much nicer to write in the garden. Her Ex., as I had learnt to call her, said to me in her whimsical, quizzing way : 'Mrs. Hinkson, how much

did you hear of the proceedings this morning? There was something you should have heard. You are the most elusive person. I see you fixed there so nicely every morning, and when I look again you are gone.' 'But, your Excellency,' I said, 'I do the articles all the same.'

I did. I had six articles on the Congress in the *Westminster*, besides 'oddments,' as a friend of mine used to call unconsidered trifles. And I actually got one into the *Times*, which was far from friendly to the women. There was a great run on the *Westminster* in the hotel, and I was the object of much interest to the delegates. One day I was sketched by a long-haired young man from a Roman paper, who flung himself into attitudes when he was told that I was a 'poet of Ireland.' The sketch was rather flattering.

That last Sunday I came back from driving with Mrs. Mulhall, after the *déjeuner*, to see St. Paul-Without-the-Walls, and the grave of John Keats in the English cemetery, to find Frank Mathew waiting for me. He had heard at just the last moment that I was in Rome. He stayed till eleven o'clock, talking over old London days; and that night was my last in the cheerful bedroom overlooking the Via Nazionale, which I loved, while other people wondered how I could endure the noise. It was nice to overhear the citizens of Rome meeting all night long, roaring a greeting while they clapped each other on the back. Baedeker had warned me against sleeping with open windows for fear of something or other—Roman fever, perhaps. My windows opened like folding doors. Every night, as soon as I had switched off my own light, I threw back the windows wide. The electric light of the streets came in and the jingling of the trams, and the jollity of the promenaders. It was exactly like sleeping in the street. Rome *may* have gone to bed in those nights, but I never knew it to.

The last day of all Frank Mathew and Mrs. Mathew came and took me to see the new Cardinal Gasquet, but,

alas, he had just gone out, and there was no further chance of seeing him. So I lunched with the Mathews as the Hotel Beausite, which had been a convent and had yet a conventional peace. My memory of it is that it was all cool, creamy-white walls and fresh green matting, and here and there through open windows a waving bough of green.

I had almost forgotten to say that when we could not see Cardinal Gasquet, the Mathews took me to see the Trevi Fountain, or perhaps it was on our way, and I threw a penny into it for the urchins to dive for, so that I might come back again according to the superstition. I should have missed the Trevi but for them. When I came back Alice Meynell asked me what I liked best in Rome, and I said the fountains. There were many things I adored in Rome—the white oxen of the Campagna, the wind that blew a scent of new-mown hay into my face as I came out of St. John Lateran's one evening, the roses, the sunshine, which I could not be persuaded was dangerous because it was just lambent light, the creamy white walls, the glimpses of gardens and the Alban Hills, certain mosaics, and the gracious and beautiful people—but above all, the fountains—not only the Trevi, but the many fountains which send a clear and shining rain of jewels into the sunny air, and the great waters like masses of the Nereids' hair at the Villa.

The Queen's garden-party was the very last of the festivities. That evening I left Rome. I was supposed to be safe and sound in a sleeping-carriage, but the berths were all taken, so I joined Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon and a friend in their carriage, where there came to us presently a beady-eyed, shivering little Italian who absolutely refused to be detached from us. I suspected him of being an anarchist, and that another gentleman of bravo-like aspect, who sat all alone in the carriage to which we would have transferred our man, waited for him with a deadly knife. Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon's friend argued with the intruder in English which she

apparently thought would reach the Italian's intelligence if she prolonged the syllables, making a sort of baby talk of it. 'We . . . three . . . ladies . . . do not want . . . man. . . . Very . . . nice . . . carriage . . . only . . . one . . . gentleman . . . that way. . . .' She waved with her hand. The Italian only shuddered and fixed his piteous eyes upon us like a beseeching animal.

Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon's arguments, when she came, were more intelligible doubtless, but no more effectual. He withdrew himself into his corner, making himself as small as possible and flinging out his hands in deprecation. An appeal to the guard was only answered by the slamming of a door. The charm of the Italian disappears when he becomes a railway official. Our little man stayed.

The night was stifling. Kind Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon, with a sense of guardianship towards me, made me lie down : my feet were within a quarter-inch of the little man's huddled knees. I did not sleep, but the wind from the open window as we rushed along blew sweetly on my face. After a time it was a sea wind. The little man was no end of a nuisance. I could swear he never removed his little black, glittering eyes from my face, what he could see of it. Not a movement escaped him.

I was sitting up from daybreak watching the country we were passing through, smelling the wind from the sea. At six o'clock we reached Genoa, and we all tumbled out and into the waiting-room where we got, from an English-speaking waiter, the most heavenly big cups of hot tea, with delicious sweet rusks and creamy butter. Some one thought of the Italian and offered him one of the rusks which we had had to carry away with us. He only shook his head mournfully.

As time went on we began rather to like him. He was so painstakingly polite, and so dreadfully anxious to efface himself. He looked rather ghastly by daylight. We began to fear he was ill or going to be ill. Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon's friend offered him a banana, saying, 'Banan-a very . . . good . . . for sick . . . man.' He only

shook his head and retired, heart-brokenly, into his corner.

I spent the morning with her Ex., whose carriage had been transformed into a bower of roses by a deputation of ladies at Pisa. I had been seeing the incredible Alps for some time before I came to her. They *were* incredible. The Apennines had been glorious, but the Alps! Every time I saw one hanging in the high sky I said to myself: ‘Now that is not an Alp: it is quite impossible: that is a cloud.’ But it was always an Alp.

The little carriage had an air of sweet and fragrant homeliness. We talked and her Ex.’s nice Scots maid put in a word now and again. Mrs. Forbes’s maid had refused to stir out of her bedroom at the Quirinal because Rome was a heathen place. She had sat there placidly sewing, and I can answer for it, since she did some furbishing-up of an evening-gown for me, that she was a pleasant and efficient young woman. I did not tell her I belonged to the Pope of Rome.

Her Ex.’s maid was, of course, a citizen of the world, yet she thought but slightlyingly of the little villages, clustered together at the foot of the Alps, and was disturbed because the people wouldn’t ‘spread,’ seeing that they had plenty of room to do it. She was not convinced by her Ex.’s argument that in the dreadful snows of winter they clustered together for warmth, and expressed the opinion that Scotland was a better place to live in.

Her Ex. transferred all her roses to me. To my grief she left us half-way, as she was going to Lyons to see the Exhibition with an eye to the Civic Exhibition which she was going to establish in Dublin that summer.

I had nearly got left behind at Modern, where the dining-car was switched off while I was in it. The lady who rescued me shrieked so much over it as to alarm me. She shrieked around me like a frightened hen, while she hustled me along the line to the train, which did not go for twenty minutes afterwards. But she made me nervous enough to seek reassurance from an American

lady, absorbed in her Baedeker, who was in the carriage I entered. She answered me shortly. But I was determined to know that I was all right. ‘Tell me this,’ I said, ‘and I shall ask no more.’ At that she smiled, though grimly, and gave me the information I desired. I have always been told that Americans are good travellers. She was the exception.

As the afternoon went on civilisation seemed to drop from off the tired travellers. I had fled to kind Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon, but as we were rather congested, and the Italian seemed to be sickening for plague, she insisted on my going back to the comforts provided by my first-class ticket.

Comfort! Good luck! The men in the corridors would not let me pass. The men in the carriages looked up with a sleepy scowl when I opened the door and never moved their feet, which were extended on the seat that should be mine. A dainty little Frenchwoman, who had been most charming earlier in the day, admiring her Ex.’s roses, barred the way to the compartment which contained only herself and her husband, assuring me volubly that every seat was taken. At last I stepped over some Hebrew legs and sat for a while listening to the gutturals. I would have welcomed even the Baedeker-absorbed American lady, but not one word of English did I hear except from my own party, till, at dinner-time that evening, I heard an English voice remark that every time its owner left England he was gladder to get back again. It was a sentiment I should have disapproved as insular at another moment: in the circumstances my heart warmed to the speaker.

Better a third-class carriage and a warm welcome than a first-class and decivilisation. I was really happy to get back to Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon, and I sat and basked with half-closed eyes and the soft wind in my face, too tired to bother about things. Orange and purple spots had come out by this time in the dark pallor of the Italian’s face. If he was sickening for the plague, as seemed likely—Kismet. If I was going to carry it home

to my adored children—Kismet. Nothing mattered. I was too tired to care.

During the afternoon the Italian began to talk to himself. He muttered sacred names mixed with what one felt to be rather sacré'd than sacred. He ground his teeth. He might have been going mad as well as getting the plague. What did it matter? No one troubled to glance his way.\* The afternoon and evening were perfectly beautiful and we were all more or less comatose.

Just after we had left Dijon behind, under a pale gold evening sky, the Italian suddenly went mad, or we thought he did. He sprang up as though he had been shot, gathered his bags and bundles and flung them into the corridor, muttering awful imprecations apparently, and while we stared at him with wild eyes of horror he dashed towards me, and—shut the window. Then he disappeared, and we did not see him again. Whether he fell a victim to the knife of the other conspirator, whether he flung himself from the rocking and rattling train, I know not. He had borne with an open window for nearly twenty-four hours, and it was too much. I hope he lived and recovered. I am sure he was a harmless, polite, good-hearted, little rabbit of a man. My own idea is that he was too ashamed of his madness to meet us again, so kept out of our sight.

The arrival at Paris, too late for the train between the stations, the delicious tea in the open café on one of the Boulevards, the drive across midnight Paris, the train, where one washed and dozed, the Channel steamer, where we sat on deck and watched the dawn come; the run through Kent, beautiful in its greenery; London; Euston; the North-Western Express with a delightful husband and wife, who had made almost the same journey, but had come by the St. Gothard route instead of the Mont Cenis. How I wished they had chosen the Mont Cenis—good English travellers! My tired eyes rested on the beautiful, comfortable English landscape, which I loved and love; but not so well as my own country.

The nice couple left me about Nuneaton. After that I remember nothing, except—hazily—my husband taking charge of me at Holyhead. I had been two days and nights without sleep. The next thing I was conscious of was awaking in my own bed after a night's sleep.

A little later I met Lily Yeats. She told me we had travelled over from Holyhead by the same boat. ‘You were very sleepy,’ she said, ‘but when I said to you : “And did you see His Eminence, the Pope,” you woke up and said very smartly, “His Holiness, you ignorant Protestant ! ”’

## CHAPTER XV

### THE GREAT SUMMER

IT was a glorious summer, disturbed by many rumours of civil war between the Ulster and the Irish Volunteers. It was just before the Roman visit that we dined one evening with the Swift MacNeills—to be accurate it was Saturday, the 25th of April. Such a dinner-party! There were about twenty-four guests, and the dinner recalled the splendid old Irish hospitality we used to brag about in the English years. Captain Warner, one of his Ex.'s A.D.C.'s, motored us to the station. On the way he told us of the thrilling events that were happening in Ulster. It was the night of the gun-running at Larne and the seizure of the police barracks. No one knew how soon the country would be in a flame.

That passed off. We were very busy with the preparation for the Civic Exhibition. The old Linenhall Barracks was being transmogrified in the most incredible way from a ruin into very handsome light and airy buildings. The situation was rather in the slums—the harmless slums, but her Ex. had got the use of the gardens of the King's Inns; there was to be a dining-club, and all manner of amusements and side-shows. It looked like being a sort of White City for the Dubliners that beautiful summer. There is nothing of the kind in Dublin, where the citizens have to go to Kingstown or Bray for open-air promenades and music.

That summer the martial spirit was very much in evidence in Dublin. The volunteers were drilling, although not yet in the high favour they were to enjoy a little later, and all the children in the slums as you went to and from the Exhibition were performing military

exercises with any old stick that might pretend to be a rifle. If you met a group of country boys or men on the road they marched in military formation. The sound of footsteps was the ringing sound of men marching in time. The country was fast becoming a nation of soldiers.

There were a great many events that summer, of one kind or another, while the shadow deepened, and the night of blood and fire came down upon the world.

Many of our events were connected with the Vice-regal Lodge, which we came to know better as time passed. It was certainly a most delightful house to stay at, and the hospitality was most generous.

Their Ex.'s guests could not do without anything even if they wanted to. I am a slow eater, and I have sometimes discovered that every one else has finished, while I am leisurely proceeding. Many a time this leisureliness has cost me a meal, or the greater portion of it. But not under Lord Aberdeen's eye. If you allowed your plate to be taken away almost full or passed a course, he always wanted to know why. Once when I found unexpectedly that her Ex. was rising, I left my coffee untasted. A few minutes later came a hot cup to the drawing-room. Lord Aberdeen was afraid I had let mine get cold.

Sometimes this kindness was embarrassing. The dining-room at the Vice-regal Lodge was lit by electric lights running round the cornice. It was soft, but rather dim light—for me at all events. When the dish came to me I would first help myself to nothing at all, a little bit of garnishing perhaps. Then Lord Aberdeen would have the dish brought back to me while every one looked on. I would help myself a second time, to half the contents of the dish, which I certainly did not mean to do.

The big round luncheon or dinner-table at the Lodge always had the air of a family party. The hospitality was unbounded. The sisters, mothers, cousins, and aunts of the Staff came and went freely, and I have been

told by one who received it that the hospitality of the A.D.C.'s room was extremely lavish. A very frivolous young lady once spoke to me with feeling about Lady Aberdeen's kindness to her guests. 'She is always so anxious about our feeling tired after our dances,' she said, 'when she herself sits up till daybreak, writing letters and looking after all the affairs of her charities.' Lord and Lady Aberdeen had a great affection for the members of their Staff, which was most heartily reciprocated.

The A.D.C.'s had many functions to attend not at all interesting to the ordinary smart young man. It was true that the A.D.C.'s I knew were not ordinary. Each of them had his special seriousness. But I have often smiled at the frock-coated, sleek-headed young man with his top-hat on his knee, waiting patiently during the meetings of the Women's National Health Association or some similar body.

There was a day when I took Mary Warner, the sister of the most energetic of the A.D.C.'s, to see A. E. at Plunkett House. A. E. was in an unfamiliar mood to me. The weather was hot and perhaps he sighed for Donegal, for he had a weary air. He said to Mary Warner, 'What are A.D.C.'s for? What do they do? I'm afraid I don't know.' 'Well,' she said, 'you see they go to the Baby Clubs, and, of course, they play with the babies, and they are expected to keep their swords and things very bright so as to amuse the babies.'

The folk-dancing was to be a special feature of the Exhibition. A very nice Miss Betty Burchenal, not a hot-air person, had come from America to teach the children folk-dancing. It was easy with Irish children, who dance like a wave of the sea, given an opportunity. One day we went with Lady Aberdeen to see the practice in the Pound, as the green, enclosed space at the back of that portion of Dublin Castle, formerly the Viceroy's town residence—now the Dublin Castle Hospital—is irreverently called. We had tea, and then we sat and

watched the children dance, little knowing that before two years passed the Pound would have had tragic use as a graveyard ; for there the bodies of many killed in the Rebellion of Easter Week were buried temporarily till they could be transferred to graveyards about Dublin. How little one could have dreamt it ! We were laughing at Captain Hope, trailing our green coat, while he said seriously that he was very proud to be an Englishman. He had just four months before being killed in action. The tall, red-haired country gentleman talking and laughing with her Ex. was to lose his son and heir almost at the same moment. How little one could have dreamt of that near future.

Later on there was a great dancing festival in the Park on a glorious summer Saturday. All that day flocks of white children—

Oh, what a multitude they seemed, those flowers of Dublin town,  
Seated in companies, they sit with radiance all their own.  
The hum of multitudes was there, but multitudes of lambs,  
Thousands of little boys and girls raising their innocent hands.

—were coming from all directions towards the Park where they sat out on the grass in rows as though they were swathes of the most delicious hay and ate their buns and oranges. Also, of course, all the parents and brothers and sisters were coming, and, generally, there was a tremendous turn-out of the Dublin poor into the beautiful Park, full of sunshine and shade and scents and songs of birds, and the wind from the Dublin mountains sweetly blowing over it. It was a most delightful gala. After the dancing Lady Aberdeen made a progress through the crowd, and was so pressed upon and hemmed in by the affectionate friendliness that a sortie had to be made to rescue her. I have somewhere a snapshot of Captain Hope, hat in hand, steering a way for her.

That day we had lunched at the Lodge—we and our three children and Denis O'Sullivan's son Curtis, who is now a captain in the American Expeditionary Army.

How elastic that big round table was ! It seemed always full, yet was always capable of expansion. Another guest that day was Sir Frederick Lely, who had been Governor of the Central Provinces of India. The next day there was to be a great review of Irish National Volunteers in Sir Henry Bellingham's park at Castle Bellingham, to which my husband and Curtis O'Sullivan were going. Sir Frederick Lely was very keen to see the Volunteers, so her Ex. asked my husband to take charge of him, and next day the three went down to Castle Bellingham, where Sir Henry and Lady Bellingham were entertaining a luncheon-party for the review. At that time the Volunteers were not altogether acceptable to the loyal party, and Roger Bellingham had got into trouble shortly after his return from Rome for an indiscreet speech made to the Volunteers.

There were about four thousand reviewed that day. Sir Frederick, who was seeking Irish types—he complained that so few of the girls were red-haired—was greatly taken with the men. ‘Good Lord !’ he said, ‘what would not the Horse Guards give for those fellows ? ’ A good many of them probably swelled the ranks of Sinn Fein later on. They had the Northern grit and doggedness. It will be remembered that some of the most serious incidents of the Rebellion happened in those parts, about Meath and Louth : and Castle-bellingham was a storm-centre.

We at home entertained some visitors that Sunday. An exhilarated one of the party which had gone a-volunteering entered the library while we were talking. ‘The English may leave this country,’ he said.

The next day Sir Frederick Lely lunched with us. He was still discontentedly pursuing his search for red-haired types of Irish beauty. We promised him that he should see some at the opening of the Exhibition which was to take place next day. The tea-gardens had been undertaken by a number of young ladies who were to run them a week at a time. We knew the Colleen Rue would be there represented. She was, most beauti-

fully, perhaps, by Kit M'Carthy, a lovely specimen of the red-haired Irish beauty, who has since been acting in *Peg-o'-my-Heart*, so you will perhaps have seen her.

The opening was a very smart function. It was like the gayest of gay garden parties, with a military pageant added. There was one very curious incident. The Lord-Lieutenant had a guard of honour of marines who were drawn up in front of the platform. Midway of his speech the word to fall in suddenly rang out from the lips of their officers : Lord Aberdeen was obviously amazed, as was every one else. He left his unfinished speech, came down from the platform, gave them a very brief review, and they swung about and marched away. They had been ordered, at a moment's notice, to rejoin their ship at Kingstown for the mobilisation at Spithead. We little knew that this mysterious happening meant the beginning of the war so long foretold, the war beyond all wars that have shaken the world. How many men there that day, looking on in amazement, were to fall in the war, how many others, men and women, were to have their hearts broken under the chariots of the war !

The Exhibition went on its way gaily. It bade quite fair to be the fashion and to show a record attendance. People could entertain their friends at the Dining-Club—it was quite the thing to give luncheon and dinner-parties there—there was a splendid dancing-hall with room for the exclusive and the unexclusive : there were the illuminated gardens, with all the fun of the fair, a cinema theatre, all sorts of amusements, as well as instructive exhibits. For some twelve days Dublin discovered and adopted the Civic Exhibition, wondering how it had done without such a pleasant place of meeting. Then the first blow fell, that was to prepare us for the extinguishing blow.

The Sunday after the Castle Bellingham meeting we had Betty Burchenal and another American lady to supper, with the Attorney-General of a Colonial Dependency and a Dublin Castle official. The Irish

Volunteers had taken a leaf out of the Ulster Volunteers' book and were gun-running in those days. A peer's daughter and the American wife of an Englishman (with Irish blood), who bears a highly distinguished English name, had brought in to Howth the romantically named White Yacht, with a cargo of rifles. There had been other gun-runnings, and the motors of our most blameless friends had assisted in conveying the weapons. We talked of nothing but the probable Civil War. We were told that every Ulster cottage and hall had its picture of the Kaiser side by side with King William crossing the Boyne, and that Ulster looked to powerful allies, if necessary.

The Colonial Attorney-General, who bore a very Irish name, said that if there was going to be a scrap he would stay and take a hand in it—on the right side, which was not Ulster's. We had a very merry evening, followed by another week of Exhibition gaieties. Then came Sunday, 26th July. Our evening visitors—we always had people to supper on Sunday—brought us word that there was trouble in Dublin. It was the day of the gun-running at Howth and the affair at Bachelor's Walk, when a company of the King's Own Scottish Borderers fired on a stone-throwing crowd and killed three people, injuring many others.

It created a tremendous sensation at the time. All things are relative, and we have grown accustomed to death and killing. I have always thought that the thoroughness with which the men of Easter Week carried out the Rebellion—the military ruthlessness—would not have been possible before the war. The sacredness of human life is lost for the time.

All Ireland was in a ferment over the Bachelor's Walk affair. Poor Lord Aberdeen did not hear of it till word was brought to him when he was at evening service in the private chapel of the Viceregal Lodge. He was distracted, and was for going at once round the hospitals to see the injured people; he was with difficulty dissuaded. Of course, Dublin was seething that night,

and it might not have been safe. The next day and the next Lady Aberdeen came to the Exhibition in mourning, looking pale and sad. She had seen the injured people, and her heart was always full of sympathy for the poor. I thought she never looked more beautiful than that day in her deep mourning, the beautiful pearl ear-rings the one note of light in her sombre costume.

That ill-fated Sunday gave the Exhibition its first blow. Dublin was in a disturbed state, and timid people were afraid to venture in the evening especially into the poor quarters of the town where the Exhibition was situated.

For some weeks of that summer there had been newspaper paragraphs about a war cloud in the East. They had not perturbed us. War clouds in the East had formed before, only to drift away and disappear. Suddenly this cloud began to darken and thicken till it bade fair to eclipse all Heaven.

## CHAPTER XVI

### WAR

THE Sunday after the Bachelor's Walk affair quiet Shankill was invaded by the sellers of successive editions of the Sunday papers, and even orthodox, church-going Shankill, which shut all its gates on Sundays as a symbol that the Day of Rest was not to be broken, bought the papers. The Cabinet was sitting. What would emerge from its decision ? Peace or War ? As the successive editions of the papers were shouted down all the quiet roads one of us said that it was like London.

I had been visiting Mrs. Rowan Hamilton, and she had recalled her being shut up in Paris in '48. She had left little children at home in Ireland, one of them, the Dowager Marchioness of Dufferin—perhaps one ought to say Hariot, Marchioness of Dufferin, since there are now two Dowagers—and she was feverishly anxious to get back to them. There were no passports to be had. A sympathetic official commended her to the only fountain of passports with the adjuration : ‘Pleurez, Madame, pleurez beaucoup. Il ne peut pas vous empêcher.’ She must have been a very beautiful young woman at that time. She arrived at the fountain-head. ‘Monsieur,’ she began, ‘il me faut un laissez-passer. Mes petits enfants en Irlande . . .’ then she dissolved in floods of tears. She heard the hasty scratching of a pen. The passport was flung at her. ‘Allez, Madame, allez au diable ! vous m’agacez. Il y a une queue de dames et elles ne font que pleurer, pleurer toujours.’

On the Sunday morning I had had a letter from Lord Aberdeen, who had hitherto been sanguine about the war cloud.

'I fear to-morrow will be Black Monday.' But it was Tuesday, the 4th, and his birthday, on which war was declared.

We were aware of it very soon at the Exhibition and in the Viceregal circle, sooner than we should otherwise have been, because the pleasant young A.D.C.'s who were entertaining at the Dining-Club and making the atmosphere of the Exhibition and the Viceregal Lodge gay with youth, went off one by one 'to an unknown destination.' That phrase frightened one. There are phrases which have an immense sadness, one knows not why. 'We sail to-morrow at dawn,' in a letter of Julian Grenfell's has the same mournful augury.

They sped away so hastily. Three out of four of the A.D.C.'s—two were not to return—were gone within the week; the other soon followed. The Exhibition became a ghostly place. The gaieties were at an end. Those who stayed were full of the vague fear and depression of the early days of the war.

The Exhibition is so much associated with Lord and Lady Aberdeen, and we were so much there in those days—I had a week as president of the tea-gardens, during which I sat and looked on at the efficient ones doing the work—that the war affected us most at that time through their circle. Everybody tried to bear up bravely against the gloom. It was impossible. Shine the sun never so warmly cold fear knocked at one's heart.

There were functions still—robbed of all their life and gaiety. One Saturday afternoon the Lord Lieutenant distributed medals to the crew of a lifeboat—or was it a fisher-crew?—who had accomplished a very gallant rescue of shipwrecked sailors. Before the function we had sat down in the covered stand from which the Viceroy was to speak. To us came a woman of the people, not Irish, I think—perhaps the English wife of a soldier, with a little boy called Tommy who had a sniff. English children favour the sniff more than Irish.

'Can me'n Tommy sit 'ere by you?' she asked affably.

'I suppose you can till the Viceregal party arrives,' we answered.

She edged a little nearer, with an intention of conversation.

'You an' me an' Tommy can stay anyhow till the nobs turn us out,' she said. 'I am tired of traipsin' round this 'ere Exhibition.'

The incident gave me but a sickly amusement. Everything was sickly in those days.

Meantime Mr. Redmond had made his famous offer of the Volunteers, and they were in high favour with loyal Unionists. I am not sure, in Shankill at least and the surrounding districts, that the favour was without reservations. I do not think there were reservations in the mind of Colonel Erck who drilled the Shankill Volunteers every Sunday afternoon—a sufficiently startling fact in itself in Irish Protestant Shankill—but then the Ercks had lived in England, which broadens the mind of the Anglo-Irish. It has been known, indeed, to make violent Irish patriots of them. But I imagine that a good many people thought Colonel Erck should have waited to see. Some public-school and Sandhurst boys drilled the Volunteers, but in our district I think our two boys were the only ones of their class who joined the ranks of the Volunteers and were drilled with them.

One Sunday we went to see the drilling. It was a rather pathetic difficulty that they could not keep the old men out. Neither could they keep the small boys, but they were easier to dispose of. The Volunteers had had old soldiers to drill them up to this time. Now the professional instructors had been called up—greatly to the improvement of the language—and voluntary instructors were in request. For just a brief period the Volunteers were fashionable.

It did not last very long. One day a neighbour at Shankill said to me of Mr. Redmond's offer—'*if he meant it.*' I thought it was a mean and unworthy suspicion, but I fear that when his contract proved beyond

his power to fulfil a good many people went back to that way of looking at it.

One of these days, going up to town we ran up against Willie Redmond at Harcourt Street Station. I had not seen him for many years, I think not since the old Parnellite days—more than twenty golden years ago—but he was not appreciably changed. He had written me a most kind and charming letter about my *Twenty-Five Years*, ignoring or magnanimously forgetting the fact that I had offended the Party some years before by something I had written in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Nothing could exceed the warmth of his greeting. He told us a good many things about the war which it is too soon to publish. We promised to spend a day at his house at Delgany when he returned from England; he was crossing that night: but it did not come off, and we never saw him again.

These were the terrible days of the Retreat from Mons. There was a day when the Judge stood and talked with us outside our gate. We looked into each other's faces, panic-stricken. Liège of the impenetrable forts had fallen: Namur had fallen. 'They will be in Paris to-day or to-morrow,' said the Judge.

The newspapers said that the Retreat was 'strategical'—blessed word! Lord Aberdeen was very gloomy one day I met him at the Exhibition, but a boy-soldier who had taken the place of the A.D.C.'s we remembered, while he waited for an injured knee to recover—he, too, was to fall in action—was very dogmatic as to its being of no importance. That very day the Irish husband of a German wife whispered into my ear—while the young A.D.C. cheerfully distributed the hot cakes intended for their Excellencies' tea; it was as well, for they never came—the tale of the Russians—45,000 he said—who had landed at Aberdeen that very day. I brought that news home joyfully. How we clung to the Russian myth! To be sure so many people had seen them! And how vexed we were when people began to say there were no Russians at all, and to explain away the myth.

That was the worst time of all—the few weeks when one went dutifully to the Exhibition to give what help one could, though the soul had departed out of the place and everything was dead. It was as though some miasma came out of the old walls and poisoned one. The tea-gardens, which had been so pretty with the plashing fountain and the painted trellis of the walls, were worst of all. One simply could not lift up one's heart there. I suppose it must have been a little courtyard of the old Linenhall between high buildings. The blank windows of the Dining-Club looked down upon the tea-tables. The band played and the fountain plashed, and the pretty girls served the scant stream of customers, and one's heart was as heavy as lead.

It was not so bad when one went home. I began then a sort of journal of the war, to which I gave fanciful names. When I was writing it I must have done it self-consciously, with an eye on posterity ; that is my impression looking back upon it. It might be very interesting if it were dug up, say, in 2014, that is, if there are not myriads like it. At first one was tremendously interested in everything about the war. One copied out and got typed even the most unimportant letters from the Front, and pasted in scrap-books the letters that were printed in the *Times* and other papers. After a while we gave up all that. The newspapers printed no more letters. The war is colossal in all things. It has been and is prodigious in its pen-driving.

Looking back on the Notes now—I decided, after many attempts at a title, to call it ‘A Woman’s Notes of the Great War’—I find it intensely depressing. The prophecies that never came true : the rumours that were so soon dissipated : perhaps, above all, the fact that these were written down in ignorance of how the war should still be dragging on, slaying and torturing, after three and a half years had gone by, makes the reading of these notes a dreary business.

Let me get back from their futilities to a tale Augustine Henry told me. Some time in the July of 1913 he

accompanied a friend abroad. They had many plans. Among other things they were to spend a week-end with the French owner of a great nursery garden on the Frontier, not far from Metz, the grounds and plantations of which ran down to the railway-line. Arriving at Metz station of a Sunday morning they were amazed by the size of the station yard, still more by what it contained. In the enormous space were miles of transport wagons and trains, enough to convey an army, great numbers of guns, machine and howitzers, long rows of motor-buses; everything in the highest state of efficiency, ready, he said, at ten minutes' notice. Some huge military manœuvres were in progress, and in order to reach the local line which would take them to their destination, they were obliged to go to a small platform at the far end of the station, good enough for civilians, being elbowed and pushed aside on their progress there by swaggering German militarism, obviously in an insolent mood. Arrived at the nurseryman's house, the Sunday quietness was interrupted by the incessant noises of war. Aeroplanes were flying over the house all night, with at least one Zeppelin. All night long military trains thundered by. The noise was diabolical. They said to their host, 'It is the mobilisation, the manœuvres, is it not?' He answered in a whisper, 'Messieurs, c'est la guerre!' The insolence of the Germans everywhere was amazing. They held their breath till they had left Metz behind. Augustine Henry added that the same thing was going on all along the Frontier. He reported the matter when he went back to London, and was told that the Government was well aware of these proceedings.

He told also how, in July of that year, 1914, he had sat beside a lady at lunch in the house at Brussels of a high Belgian official, when she had made bitter complaint about her son's having been called up. Augustine Henry, perhaps because of his long residence in China, has a way infinitely leisurely. He is imperturbable. 'Madame,' he said, 'you do not seem to know what is

about to befall your country,' and so set out to enlighten her. His host thanked him afterwards. 'These people are our despair,' he said. 'They will not believe, will not realise.'

Augustine Henry added that his host on that occasion was a member afterwards of the Commission which reported to America on German atrocities in Belgium. Thereupon I asked him if there was any truth in the story, so widely believed at the time, about the chopping-off of Belgian babies' hands. It was as much as friendship was worth with a great many people to express any incredulity. Some men may have believed the story, but all the women did. When I asked him the question a lady at the table began to assure us vehemently that the tales were true. 'A cousin of mine in London has two refugee Belgian children, both with their hands cut off.'

Augustine Henry waved her away with his imper-  
turbable good humour.

'I sat by a Cabinet Minister at dinner the other night in London,' he said, 'and I asked him that question, "Are these stories true or are they not ?" He answered : "So far as we can ascertain, there is not a word of truth in them. We have sifted the reports thoroughly, sending an official to any place where such children were reported to be. We have not found a single instance."

Another evening Augustine Henry talked of the Navy and its patrol of the seas. He told us of the *Alabama*, which in the days of the Civil War, drove American trade with the West off the seas—for all time, he said. There had been a very considerable trade in tea between America and China which the *Alabama* destroyed, once and for ever. He told us, to illustrate the immensity and loneliness of the seas which the Navy had to patrol, 'I once travelled between Yokohama and San Francisco, and on the whole journey we never saw a sail or a funnel : it was one vast emptiness. The line by which I travelled had two boats running each way weekly. I said to the

captain that it was a queer thing we had never sighted a ship. He answered : " I 've travelled between these ports for twenty years, backwards and forwards, and in all that time I 've never sighted a vessel." That was, of course, once he had got away from the harbour.'

One of these days I sat beside Frank Sheehy Skeffington in a Dublin tramcar. Like many people I had an affection for him, he was so indomitable, such a fighter, and yet so gentle. I remembered his facing a yelling anti-Suffrage crowd with the remark that he was pleased to have met the Ancient Order of Hooligans, and how, disguised as a priest, he had slipped into the Asquith meeting at the Dublin Theatre Royal bent on heckling the Premier that night of all nights when the usually amiable Dublin crowd was dangerous, the night of the hunting of the women.

We talked of the war, and the people about us listened ; he was a Dublin character. Of course, he was a thorough-going pacifist ; he accepted literally : ' He who takes the sword shall perish by the sword,' and abhorred bloodshed and violence of any kind.

I answered him : ' I was once as keen as you that war should cease, till a distinguished naval officer asked me one day when I was talking Norman Angell : " But if you disarm how are you to keep out the barbarous nations ? " ' That remark had made me think.

' Oh, but,' the little man responded, ' that difficulty could be met by an extended system of Frontier police.'

Before I could do more than gasp the tram stopped at my destination. If I had foreseen the future I might have gone a bit further with him.

That autumn we had a fillip we badly needed in the appointment of my husband to the Resident Magistracy. The vacant post was in the West of Ireland. Lord Aberdeen in his letter offering the appointment said : ' I hope the place will not be too uncongenial for the present.' Our kind friend went out of office, and we have spent going on for four years in the West. But they have not been wasted years. I cannot imagine

what they would have meant to me, solitary as they proved to be, if I had not been occupied incessantly and with engrossing work, if I had not believed that I was sent there for a purpose.

My husband's station was Castlebar. I went down to see him settled in, and I felt that it was the end of the world and beyond. After a few days I returned to Dublin, where I was to stay for a few months till the term of years for which we had our Shankill house had expired. Castlebar was really not an uncheerful place. There would have been society, and I should have given mortal offence by not keeping up with it. But there is a terrible place called Manulla Junction, before you reach Castlebar, where the train sits in the middle of the bogs as though it never meant to go on again. Once you pass Athlone on the Midland-Great-Western Railway of Ireland, you think you have arrived at Ultima Thule and the Back o' Beyant; when you come to Manulla Junction you are sure of it.

I accompanied my husband to Kiltimagh (pronounced Kul-cheemauch), his first court, and I waited at the parish priest's house. That is the delightful thing about Ireland, that you can always walk into the parish priest's house and make your own of it. Father Denis O'Hara, who is a notable priest, and a member of the Congested Districts Board, came in to find me seated in his room, correcting the typescript of my latest novel. He sat down and talked to me about many things. Two of his subjects were Mr. George Wyndham and Sir David Harrel, both of them among his great admirations. Father Denis is a remarkable man. Very soon after I met him I discovered a bundle of letters from Bee Walshe, whom I wrote about in *Twenty-Five Years*. They were dated some time in 1882. My eye fell on this passage :

‘I have just come back from a place called Kiltimagh, Kitty. You won't know anything about it, but it is so wild and barbarous a place that we talk here of “Going from Ireland to Kiltimagh.”’

Father Denis has altered all that. The curfew has been rung at 9 o'clock every night since he has been P. P. of Kiltimagh, and the honest people have gone home to their own firesides. But there is unrest in the air. How much longer will his people yield him unquestioning obedience ?

He was the first of the good Western priests who were to prove almost our only society in Mayo.

I had a long wait that day at Kiltimagh, the new R. M. not having yet learnt to get through his courts expeditiously. All day long Father Denis came in and out—he is a tremendously busy person—pressing hospitality on me every time, staying a few moments for a talk before going off again.

As I travelled back to town I met another notable Western priest, Canon Keavency of Charlestown. He, too, talked of George Wyndham and Sir David Harrel. He said of the latter, who had been a R. M. in Mayo during the worst of the wild times of the Land League, that the people he sentenced were obliged to him, he did it so beautifully. He mentioned also that when Sir David was transferred, during those very same years, to the Chief Commissionership of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, he was played to the station by the Land League band.

All who had loved Mr. Wyndham had sore hearts in those days, since Percy Wyndham, beautiful and young, had fallen in the second month of the war, and he was his father's only child. One was glad then that George Wyndham had not lived for such suffering.

## CHAPTER XVII

### LAST DAYS AT SHANKILL

THAT autumn and winter one thought and talked of nothing but the War. We were a household of women at Clarebeg, since one boy was keeping his father company in the west, and the other was at Shrewsbury. The elder boy, just seventeen, had attempted to enlist at the beginning of the war, but we had vetoed it since he was not strong. Every day Pam went to her convent school in Dublin, leaving about 9 o'clock and returning about 2.30 unless I had business or pleasure in Dublin, when she met me at Harcourt Street. We used to get up at 7 o'clock, while it was still dark, get out for a walk as the morning mists were just beginning to roll themselves away, or while the frost yet lay on the fields and the dead leaves of the tree-hung road. If we were early the bakers' carts were still exchanging their bread at the top of the road. That was how we knew the time because, although I had possessed several ornamental no-time-keepers, I had always gone by the public clocks or a distant 'hooter,' or the bakers' carts, or some such thing.

We used to have our walk, and talk to any one we met who seemed interesting, and come back hungry for breakfast, after which the little figure would go off up the road to the station, and I would work till lunch-time.

We were often at the Lodge that autumn and winter, and we went about a good deal with Lord and Lady Aberdeen. We made out a certain amount of gaiety despite the Shadow of the War. When we did not stay at the Lodge we often came home by the last train, and

that excellent railway porter, Mr. Grogan, a genial person who was a great favourite with the Shankillites, would lock up the station, take his lantern, and see us home down the dark road. Mr. Grogan was a charming person and well deserved his promotion to be a station-master, but I'm glad I was not there when it happened, since it took him away. They were such friendly people. Mr. Doyle, the station-master, was a fine old Irish gentleman. He had a fatherly way with every one. If you offered him gold or a note when you purchased your railway ticket, he put it back gently but firmly into your hand, gave you your ticket and coppers for your first tram journey, and told you to pay him when you came back.

His son was killed in the war, and the dear old man's blitheness was killed too. Things are not the same now when one goes back.

Mr. Grogan had been one of the first to welcome us to Shankill. I believe we met him on the very same occasion when an almost fantastic gentleman, by his dress a Dublin artisan, stopped us at the railway bridge and asked if we would accept a rose from a small bunch he was carrying. Dear Shankill—it was all sweet and kind, or nearly all.

Once or twice we had, instead of Mr. Grogan's escort, our neighbour, Donald Fletcher, who had come down in the last train with us. He was a beautiful boy, tall and splendid-looking. He was killed in a bombing accident in Salonika last year.

Ah, they were good times! We had our little adventures, all of them pleasant. One rimy winter morning we talked with a strange R.I.C. man who was guarding the viaduct by the Bride's Glen, sweet spot! All railway bridges and waterworks had their guards in those days. Dublin Corporation had just expressed to the citizens its sorrow at any annoyance caused to them by the erroneous report of the Roundwood Reservoir having been poisoned. Our R.I.C. man was from the North and dour, but a Papist and a Nationalist. They are all more or less dour in the North. He was very bitter

about the Ulster Orangemen. ‘They have so long had all the plums in the garden that they cannot bear the other man to look over the wall.’ It takes an Ulsterman to stand up to an Ulsterman. He would have been a match, man for man, of the most obdurate Orangeman.

Then there was the young, shy, working man in the train who, nevertheless, had a good deal to say for himself, with whom we discussed the War. He was not pro-war. He was not pro-German. He gave one the impression of waiting to see. After he had left us at a wayside station he came back to say : ‘Von Bernhardi says that war is the medicine of the world.’

There was the R.A.M.C. man who wanted to get into the fighting line, and spoke of himself disparagingly as only a Ram Corps man. He was not very young, and had served through the South African War. Shankill was but half-an-hour by rail from Dublin. It was wonderful how many discussions we managed to get into these half-hours. One of the Ram Corps man’s stories was as follows : ‘During the South African War I was travelling down to the base. There was a Canadian trooper in the wagon with me. It was the time of year when the nights are very cold on the veldt. He asked me if I had a blanket and I said no, that I had my great-coat and it was warm enough. He said “You ’ll find that it will not be warm enough,” and as he said it he tore his sleeping bag in two and gave me half. It kept the life in me during the night, and, when I awoke in the grey dawn, I saw him lying on the floor of the wagon fast asleep, wrapped in the other half of the bag. I laid my half over him, for I had reached my destination, and I went away very sad, feeling I should not see him again.’ The next time I saw the Ram Corps man he had got a commission in the Royal Irish Regiment, so he had his desire.

‘This war ’s affectin’ every wan,’ said a car-driver to us one day. ‘How does it affect you ?’ we asked. ‘Och, sure, me son was out last night drivin’ wan o’ them coast-guard min to Bray.’

Some one told us that he travelled in a train with two Reservists and their wives to Limerick Junction. The two ladies were very noisy in their grief. They were working up to a final demonstration when they alighted at the Junction, only to find the troop-train gone. Immediately their humour changed and they began to abuse the men. ‘What’s the matter wid you?’ asked one of the ill-used husbands. ‘A few minits ago you were bawlin’ at the thought o’ partin’ wid me, an’ now I’m wid ye still, here ye are throwin’ hard words at me!’ ‘If I was bawlin’ itself,’ returned the lady, ‘I had the comfort of it that I’d have your allowance; but look at me now! The devil an allowance I’m likely ever to see at all, at all.’

One of these autumn afternoons we had a wire from Sir Horace Plunkett asking us to dinner, saying he would send his motor for us. We found among the guests our old friend, E. F. Knight. He took me in to dinner. He had just returned from a visit to the Grand Fleet. He said they are very cheerful, and perpetually watchful. He had seen the departure on their ill-fated voyage of the *Aboukir*, *Hogue*, and *Cressy*.

One of his stories was about Lord Salisbury and a settling-up in which a small nation—Montenegro, was it?—wanted a seaport. Lord Salisbury studied a map and discovered Cattaro—E. F. K. explained the line of the coast to me, drawing diagrams with his one hand on the table-cloth—a tiny bit of seaboard wedged in between Turkey and Austria. Lord Salisbury sent for the Turkish Ambassador. ‘Will the Sublime Porte agree to Montenegro having Cattaro?’ The Ambassador bowed: the Sublime Porte was quite agreeable. ‘That’s settled then,’ said Lord Salisbury, well pleased to have got one thing off his mind. Later, when he was explaining the dispositions to the Austrian Ambassador, he said, ‘Turkey is willing to cede Cattaro to the Montenegrins.’ ‘Oh, but we are not,’ said the Austrian Ambassador: ‘Cattaro is ours.’

Sir Frederick Treves had saved Knight’s life at the

expense of his arm. E. F. K. had told us the story in our London days. It was after the battle of Belmont. Antiseptics and anæsthetics alike had run out : it was a ghastly business. He lay among the wounded in a hospital tent. Gangrene had set in among the wounded. Treves entered the tent and passed from one bed to the other, shaking his head. By Knight's bed he paused. 'Have you ever had chloroform ?' he asked. Knight opened an eye. 'Several times. If you don't mind, the brand I prefer is 2—.' 'There's hope for this fellow,' said Treves, taking off his coat and turning up his shirt sleeves. 'We'll have that arm off.'

He said that the Indian troops would follow the white officers anywhere. 'Our officers say "Go!'" (I've forgotten the Hindoo words.) 'Your officers say "come!'" an Indian soldier had said to him.

Augustine Henry, when he talked of the English as making the best travellers in the world, the most friendly and helpful, added this bit of observation : 'Continental peoples have a code of manners towards their own women. They have none towards the women of other nations.'

One day Sir David Harrel came to see us, and talking of the different conditions in this war as compared with the Crimean War through which his brother had fought, he said : 'In the Crimea the condition of the Allies, French and English, was most wretched. The transports with food were held up at Sebastopol till a violent gale came and blew them out to sea. In the bitter cold of the Russian winter the men's clothes hung upon them in rags. When a ship-load of boots arrived from England, it was found that they were all for the one foot. The men's feet were frost-bitten and gangrened, and there were, of course, neither antiseptics nor anæsthetics. The trenches and the bodies of the men crawled with vermin.'

Christmas, 1914, came and went. We had not much longer to stay at Shankill and we were growing rather nervous. There was talk of invasion. The servants

were terribly alarmed by the flashlights and the sound of guns out at sea. Two or three times we left them to their fate and the dogs, and went off to the Lodge. They had not even the support of Gregory, the gardener, who had become infected by the military spirit and carried his spade as a rifle when he was not using it to give the military salute.

One afternoon I was sitting in the library when Sergeant B—— of the R.I.C. was announced. He came in, affable, but with a portentous air. The speech rolled from his tongue richly.

'I have been visitin' the residents of Shankill,' he began, with the air of one who has learnt a lesson off by heart. His eyes were fixed on the wall above the fireplace. 'I am instruucted by the military authorities to inform ye that ye are to hold yourselves in readiness to leave your house at a minit's notice and to proceed across the mountains be vehicle, motor, or otherwise, or on foot, to a place to be indicated to ye. Before departure ye are to destroy any stores ye possess that may be of value to the inimy. What cattle ye have ye are to drive over the mountains before ye. Any hay or corn ye possess must be desthroyed. If ye have a motor-car it is to be conshumed be fire before ye start or we will do it for ye.'

He paused for breath, and I suggested hens. He stopped to think and decided.

'Hins. Ye may abandon hins. They 're wild little divils to dhrive. Like as not they 'd evade the inimy's capture. Now there are three forrums the danger may take. There is the danger from a bombardmint : there is the danger from an airship or Zeppelin raid : and there is the danger of an inimy landin'. From all these dangers it is my duty to protect the people of Shankill. Now, ma'am, I do not wish you to be onduly alarmed by my intilligence : I hope it will not be me duty to warn ye, but if it is I thrust it may not be at twelve to-night.'

I thought of : 'Pray it be not on the Sabbath.'

'But if that is me painful duty, it will be done be me and me min with the greatest possible considheration consistent with duty: ye may be sure of that, ma'am. But in case ye 've got to step out of your beds and go, I 've ordhered the church bells to ring be way of warnin'. You approve of that manner of warnin' the people in case of a sudden alarrum? 'Tis well to be prepared. The route I 've marked out for the inhabitants of Shankill is be way of Ballycorus and Kilternan across the mountains to Rathfarnham—'

I saw myself of a snowy night 'proceeding' by way of Ballycorus and Kilternan across the mountains to Rathfarnham. Perhaps I might do it—with the Germans behind me.

The sergeant went on breathlessly: 'Th' inhabitants of Ballybrack, be order, are to proceed be way of the Bride's Glin and follow the route marked out for th' inhabitants of Shankill. Them 's me insthructions. The ringin' of the church bells in case of sudden alarrum was me own invintion. Don't show more lights than ye can help. In the case of live stock—'

I was afraid he was beginning it all again, and I hastily asked him if he would like a drink.

'Thank you, ma'am,' he said gratefully, 'talkin' s dhry work. Well, just an idea, a sketch, not to give offence, what I once heard described as a soup-song. I must be gettin' on me way. I only hope nothing I 've said will alarrum ye! Nothin' may come of it, but I have me orders from the military authorities as to the manner in which ye are to proceed.'

It was really no joke, though I laughed when the sergeant had gone. By the way, to explain the paucity of our live stock, we had been getting rid of things with a view to departure. We had given away our old cob, and the Shetland, Puck, the fastest and wildest of little ponies, had followed his master to the West of Ireland. We had had goats. The inhabitants of Shankill had a pleasing way of letting their goats go wild on the mountains when they were done milking. When you re-

claimed your goat you usually found a kid in addition, but some people did not reclaim their goats, so that there was quite a wild herd on the mountains.

Some time in the preceding summer our goat, who had gone to the mountains, arrived home unexpectedly. It was a Sunday, and we heard the most tremendous hubbub. A boy went to the door and discovered the whole juvenile population of Shankill surrounding our goat and a majestic patriarch of a billy-goat.

'We met her walkin' down from Katty Goliher' (a popular corruption of our special mountain's name), 'an' we knew it was yer goat an' we hooshed her home to ye,' they cried in chorus.

Largesse—the American poet, Joaquin Miller, when he visited London, used to throw six coppers to be scrambled for by street urchins : he called it largesse—being given to the extent of fourpence, was gratefully received. It was no benefit to us to have the goat back, but we had to reward such obvious goodwill.

'Will ye have th' ould billy as well, sir ?'

'Certainly not : the billy doesn't belong to us.'

'Ye could have him thrown in, sir, for the fourpence.'

So the spokesman of the crowd. This handsome offer not being accepted, the whole wild little crowd rushed off after the billy-goat to 'hoosh' him up the mountains again.

A few days later our goat went off to the society of the mountain. We did not attempt to reclaim her, so that was the end of *that* live stock.

We need not have left Shankill till May but we longed for family reunion, and Lord Aberdeen was going out, and we thought that Dublin would be terribly flat and dull without their Excellencies. So we began to pull up our tent-pegs. We did it rather unsatisfactorily, for at the last moment, when I should have been the presiding genius of the move, we went off to the Lodge for a few days, whereby, I am told, numberless things were forgotten and lost. I can only say it was worth it. If it had not been that they were going we might have had

misgivings when we stepped Westward. We had none. Besides, we were coming back in a fortnight for the going-out. We might just as well have waited where we were. I can't imagine why we did not. The journey into the West was long and expensive. But it would be something, after the settling-in, to look forward to the return.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE COUNTY OF MAYO

BECAUSE of the absence of a suitable house at Castlebar my husband had been transferred to Claremorris, where for some weeks he had been awaiting us enjoying the comforts of a West of Ireland hotel. It was perhaps to make his lot happier that we had cut off short the delights of our Shankill life. I have always faced every 'move' with a high heart. When people said to me, 'But how will you endure life in Mayo?' I had answered that we loved the country. When I was told that we should have no society I had an arrogant reservation in my own mind. *We* should find society.

Well, if there is an uglier place on earth than a West of Ireland country town, I do not know it. Mayo has beautiful cottages through the county, but the townspeople have not yet developed that civic feeling which makes the mediæval towns so beautiful. Claremorris is entirely without corporate dignity; it takes no colour from the lives of its inhabitants. Nothing greyer, colder, less attractive could well be imagined. It is perhaps because it is a big junction through which people are always passing that it gives one the impression of a collection of temporary buildings—'shacks'—such as might be flung down anyhow beside the railway line of an American mining district. About the middle of the main street are a couple of ruined houses, windowless, with broken roofs, covered heavily in the deep green moss of the humid West, sagging towards the street. It is apparently nobody's business to remove them.

The first sight of Claremorris, especially if it is a wet

day, is profoundly depressing. You pity the people who have to live in such a place. How dreary their lives must be! But there you are wrong. There is a deal of gay, vivacious, highly coloured life, in Claremorris as in other Western towns. They are called towns, and they are towns by right of the amount of trading and the money that passes in them. Beyond that they have hardly the dignity of a decent village.

But the people—oh, that is quite another matter. The people enjoy themselves. There is more gaiety in one of these ramshackle Irish towns than in many beautiful English county towns. They have dances, concerts, plays ; they are extraordinarily gifted. Beautiful voices, dramatic and musical talent, hang on every tree. Sometimes one goes out from amongst us and becomes famous ; but many do not chose to go. The West is a very close borough. The West only cares for the West, accepts the West, understands the West ; when it is minded for a change it goes to the greater West across the ocean, only to return before it dies.

The gifts await development. Just recently a friendly musical parson had the idea of establishing a Choral Society in Claremorris and asked for voices. They came, more than he could handle. After a fortnight's training the choir took part most creditably in a concert.

After the concert was a dance. There were not wanting swallow-tails and evening dresses. There was abundance of taste.

All over the West there are miniature Abbey Theatres. I have not seen a performance, but I believe the acting is excellent.

The melancholy aspect of Claremorris and other Western towns is in the eye of the stranger. It is emblematic of the fact that the West shuts her door in your face and puts the key in her pocket, unless you are a born Westerner. There are none of the pleasant parleys you have with the peasants elsewhere ; in the South and East, in Donegal, in Connemara, people tell me. Perhaps I have spoken too loosely of the West ; or, is Mayo

of the Land League the concentration of this close western spirit which lives to itself and for itself?

I can look back to my first day in Mayo with a sort of pity for myself. I had said to the children: ‘It may be ramshackle, but it will be, oh, *so* friendly!’ It wasn’t friendly except for one or two people and the priests, and the nuns, when I gave them a chance. People who wander into the life of Mayo from outside are apt to wear a lost look.

Sir David Harrel had told us long ago that the Mayo gentry were the most exclusive in Ireland. There were few gentry about Claremorris. There must always have been few, for there are no houses. The Land League and the Congested Districts Board between them had swept away the gentry. The few who were left were further sifted by the war. Those who remained were at long distances off, beyond reach of anything but a motor. There was hardly a door open to us, a fireside where we could sit down, except the priests’ and the doctor’s, for the Claremorris doctor and his family had touch with literature. Anywhere else in Ireland you would have been on friendly terms with your humbler neighbours. Mayo did not encourage that, except in the case of a few of the old people who had been attached to the vanished gentry.

Our new abode was not yet ready for us, so for a few days we looked on at the urbanities of Claremorris. Full in view of our sitting-room windows stood a hearse all day and every day. On the Sunday there was a funeral, and we heard the shrieking of the mourners. The West flaunts its coffins more than other places. There are shop windows full of them in its streets.

We had arrived on a very fine winter day, with a hint of spring in it. I had such a blithe heart towards the new life that after a meal I insisted on going to see our new home. It was a couple of miles away, and, when we got there, a churlish person would not admit us, although we could see our furniture in stacks in the rooms. On the way back I got drenched, as one only gets drenched in

Ireland—at least one doesn't in England. I have been drenched many a time since, but I have got acclimatised. It is a saying that Mayo rain does not give cold. But I was not then acclimatised, and I caught one of the worst colds I can remember. All that spring through and for what was left of winter, I suffered from the damp cold, till I became acclimatised. I have sometimes remembered, when I have inveigled an invalidish Dublin friend to Mayo in winter with assurances of its extraordinarily bracing climate, and have become suddenly aware of the pinched blueness of her face as she stretched hands to the magnificent turf and wood fires—for we have that glorious mixture of fuel : it is one of the compensations.

The day after we got into our new home, while we were tackling the problem of fitting our furniture into a partly furnished house, Mayo showed us what she could do in the way of weather. Hail, rain, sleet, snow, and a gale from the Atlantic, flooded the hall when the door was opened to admit the furniture from yet another van, and did the best imitation of a banshee I have ever heard in one of the big upstairs bedrooms. Fortunately it was not at the dead hour of night I heard it first : even in daylight I required the confidence imparted by the presence of the man in charge of the removing—a person of some six-foot-four, and brawny in proportion. There must have been a hidden ventilator in the wall of that room, for with the wind in the south-east, it played on — Something. The banshee-cry began very low down and rose to a tortured shriek, died away to a low sobbing and began again.

I and the remover stared at each other with a wild surmise when it began. It was eldritch, to use a fine expressive Scottish word. Mayo air is certainly not nervy. I often heard that crying afterwards and knew it was a ventilator.

The R. M. and Toby motored that day to Achill Sound with the motor half-full of hail and water, unable to put up the hood because the wind across the bogs would turn over the car. They were already

acclimatised. It was a hundred Irish miles there and back.

What Carradoyne might have been if one had been permitted to choose one's wall-papers and dispense with the furniture that was not required, I do not know. It was a Georgian house, very pleasant to look at outside, with its long rows of windows swathed in ivy; and it caught all the sun when the sun came. Our predecessor had been a great gardener, and when the winter turned to spring there came masses of wallflowers and forget-me-nots and clove pinks under our windows. The place had been beautifully laid out by some one, who had done the Grand Tour apparently. The house stood on a rampart. You descended to the tennis-lawn, surrounded by flowering shrubs, by a few steps! Below the tennis-lawn stretched the park-like fields, laid out with Italianate groups of stone pines, poplars, and all deciduous trees. The garden was glorious. It seemed dead when we came, but, in time, there sprang up the most lovely herbaceous border, which changed with every change of the seasons. That garden had many charming ruralities, as Mrs. Delany would have said. It was divided into four squares, with deep beds around the walls as well. Two squares were kitchen garden: the others were lawns. One had a little hazel-grove, where you might pick your nuts. Gnarled apple-trees were in every border, thick-set about their feet with flowers. There were rose-arches to all the paths. Here, a wide sheet of forget-me-nots stretched under green apple boughs. There, were masses of splendid poppies, of delphinium, borage and anchusa, wonderful for their splendid blues, with sheets of every sort of sweet-smelling double narcissus, and always the background of masses of clove pinks of a beautiful whiteness.

We found in the house a picture of the herbaceous border which had been very faithfully copied from that in a famous English garden. When you looked along it, from the gate that admitted to the garden to the gate at the other end, which opened on the

orchard, it was splendid, a wild revel of massed, pure colour.

The garden was high above the house, which was sheltered from the north by a pine-wood. At its lowest part you were on a level with the chimneys of the house, which was bad for the house. I had selected a slip of a room, with a glass door opening out among the pinks, for my own, had put on a good paper and set up my pretty things. It was delightful while the summer lasted—till the insects came.

No one had thought of mentioning the insects. There were not only flies—in myriads, and with a tiger-like ferocity—but there were all manner of queer bees, the colour of pale honey and very slim, young bees probably, from the ages-old hive in the chimney. There was a certain hedge of Portugal laurel—two hedges, in fact—between which one approached the house-door. When it came to August and September you sprinted between those hedges, covering your face. Out came the flies in a swarm and attacked you. You made for the hall into which they did not follow you. Perhaps they disliked the smell of peat.

The first spring and summer were not so bad. We had a small social circle. And to be sure Pam and I went up in February for the going-out of Lord Aberdeen, and had some days of happiness with a sad close, and we went up again in April when Lady Aberdeen had come back.

Let me say here how beautiful the atmosphere of the Lodge was in those winter days. It was more than ever a family party, with all the poor young men gone, and very little state kept, and only guests who were attached friends. I remember especially the Sundays. We all went off in the morning to whatever church we desired. After lunch most people retired to their bedrooms, some to sleep perhaps, for the Lodge kept late hours—I to write by the roaring fire in the pretty room with the abundance of electric light. I wrote many letters there, and poems and articles in a most delightful

freedom. You could have your tea in your bedroom as you could have your breakfast. All around outside stretched the grounds of the Lodge and the Phoenix Park, with a distant view of the mountains. Dublin was out of sight and hearing. There was not a sound but the measured tread of the sentry outside, and the occasional distant whistle of a train.

On such days the atmosphere of the Lodge seemed steeped in peace. I don't think I ever enjoyed such happy freedom to do exactly as I pleased, and everything pleased me.

Only once was I disturbed, and that was in the old part of the Lodge, not in the gay, new part which had been built on when King Edward visited Ireland. I had a nightmare in which one of the old Lord-Lieutenants came down out of a picture on the wall and stood by my bed. I jumped up half-awake, or perhaps quite asleep, looking for the electric light. But I could not find it, and all the furniture came round me and hit me most unfairly. I preferred the gay, new part, with the electric light within reach of your hand and no suggestion of ghostliness.

Lord and Lady Aberdeen used to attend the Service in their Private Chapel at seven o'clock. Afterwards there was dinner, and we talked. There was no music on Sunday evening, or perhaps there was only sacred music.

That last visit the Lodge was crowded with visitors, on the same errand as ourselves, to see them off. There was too much to do to be sad. All day long and well into the night there were functions of all sorts, meetings, receptions of deputations, reading of addresses, and so on. There was no time to feel the sadness.

They were to go on the Saturday—we had been there from Wednesday. There was to be an Investiture at Dublin Castle and a farewell reception, after which they were to make their State exit. Dublin Castle was already a Red Cross Hospital. We had seen it opened before we went into the West. By the way, I had

appealed for the hospital in various London papers, Selfridges having given up their advertising space for the purpose. The appeal brought me several donations of ten pounds to found a bed. I had made up with a couple of friends another ten pounds. I handed in the money and the names of the donors to be affixed to the beds. When it came to the opening ceremony I, of course, could not see my name on any bed, nor did I look for it, for I had given instructions that the composite bed was to be named simply the Friends' Bed. But people came to me that day of the opening and said : 'How generous you have been ! You have endowed so many beds.' And one lady said : ' You extravagant woman ! You told me you were ruined by the war, yet I see your beds all over the place ! '

Well, I was simple enough to think that some of my kind donors, who had expressed no special wish with regard to the beds, had written to say that my name should go on them. I had very kind replies from some whom I thanked, but I think, looking back, that there was a note of embarrassment in the replies. I made one or two efforts to set things right in the remaining cases—so far as I can remember, only one lady had expressed a definite wish—but I suppose nothing was done, and I am still looked upon as a generous donor. One lady, who had contributed to the Friends' Bed, never forgave me. I thought her coldness caprice, and didn't bother. But quite suddenly one day, not so long ago, when my thoughts wandered to those days I had an illumination. To that lady, at least, I must seem a monumental fraud.

I never saw but one bed with my name. I was led to it the last time I visited the Castle Hospital. There was a boy in it who was suffering from trench feet. He must have been out a good while, for I asked him if it was true that when the Expeditionary Force landed the French ladies received them with flowers and kisses. He replied, 'Not 'arf. Blowin' it were an' rainin' an' a thick fog at 'arf four in the mornin''. The soldier

sitting by his bed, who was convalescent, looked at me with bright intelligence and said : ‘ I ’ve read lots of your books.’ He was a Liverpool boy, with Irish blood in him.

I leave it to Heaven to sort out that matter of the beds.

That day of the proposed going-out the rain rained and the wind bléw till it rose to a tempest, and at the last moment, because of the people who would stand in the wet streets to see the spectacle, the going-out was postponed till Monday. I have always been glad of that storm. Only the intimates returned to the Lodge. I went off immediately to write an article for something or other about the functions of the week, while the other ladies implored Lady Aberdeen, who was in the last stage of fatigue, to say whether they should stay or go and leave her to a very quiet Sunday. It ended in all staying.

I was glad I did not miss that last Sunday when, after dinner, Sir Anthony Weldon, the State Steward and Chamberlain, got up and delivered a panegyric of Lord and Lady Aberdeen, saying in simple soldier fashion what every one felt. Lord Aberdeen responded, making some gentle and touching reference to every guest present.

I remembered that Sir David Harrel had said that of many Viceroys he had heard speaking, Lord Aberdeen was by far the best speaker. That last evening does not bear talking of. It was dedicated to affection and admiration and the sadness of parting and all the humanities.

That night after dinner Lord Aberdeen spoke to me about certain things he wanted said some day. I hope I may live to say them. It is as yet too soon.

## CHAPTER XIX

1915

ONE of those last nights at the Lodge, Sir Neville Wilkinson, Ulster King-at-Arms, who had taken me into dinner, mentioned that the eyes of a man coming out of action were always pale blue. Dark blue, grey, hazel, brown, had all become pale blue. A film, I suppose. I have seen it drawn suddenly across the very blue eyes of an old man when he heard of disgrace to his son.

'No war,' says A. E., 'ever settled a spiritual problem or gave victory to a spiritual ideal.'

They knew very little about the War at Claremorris. A few days after I arrived there I heard the statement : 'There are submarines in the Irish Sea and eggs are down to one-and-four.' So did Claremorris correlate the things of war.

In the newspaper shop a very old man used to sit smoking and talking to the customers. He had been in the Connaught Rangers and had fought in the Crimea. He was deaf if any one talked about the magnitude of the War. 'The year '55,' he said, 'was the cowldest any wan remembers here at home. 'Twas worse in the trinches. The Crimayan War was the greatest war the world ever seen.'

Contrariwise, another very old man, in Castlebar, said to my husband : 'I don't know at all what God can be doin' to let this war go on. I 'm entratin' an' entratin' Him day an' night to put a stop to it, an' still it goes on. It could not be that He isn't listenin' to me. Ah, well, sure, He knows His own business best.'

The old men are often very delightful. They and the old women have kept the Irish graces which have all

but vanished from a younger generation. They are very quaint. Dr. Conor Maguire of Claremorris told me that an old man had said to him : ‘ I do often be thinking of John the Baptist, an’ what a quare thing it was that he was the friend of th’ Almighty, an’ yet for all that th’ Almighty would let his head be cut off and put on a dish. Th’ Almighty does quare things sometimes. Why wouldn’t He ? Sure, there’s no wan to hinder Him.’

There was a delightful old fellow, Johnny Ansbro, who used to drive us to Mass on Sunday mornings when we first came. He talked all the time in a slow, easy fashion, and he never hurried his horse. If the horse was going too slow for your taste or purpose, and he thought you were about to mention it, he immediately distracted your attention or told you a story. ‘ D’ ye see that point there betune the two trees where a little lane joins on to the road. Well, one day Father M’Hugh and Father Killeen were stannin’ there talkin’ an’ a little rabbit ran in betune them an’ she stood up on her hind legs an’ begged for her life. Then the priests looked down an’ they seen a weasel afther her, an’ they threw a stone at the weasel an’ it kilt him. An’ she ran off thin into the hedge. How would you account for it, ma’am, the knowledgeableness of the dumb baste that it was to the priests she kem ? ’

Once, driving the doctor to a case and desiring to distract his attention from the amble of the mare, Johnny waved his whip round the horizon. ‘ I do be thinkin’,’ he said, ‘ that there’s a dale o’ land about here.’ ‘ There is,’ said the doctor, ‘ an’ a dale o’ water as well, and if you don’t get that old mare of yours along quicker than you’re doing, I’ll get down and walk.’

Johnny said to me once : ‘ A few loads o’ gravel on your avenue, ma’am, would do no harm. The bones o’ the land do be comin’ up through the skin.’

An old woman said one day of a niggardly person : ‘ Sure, I’m not wishin’ him to die : still an’ all I wouldn’t be grudgin’ him to his Maker.’

Ireland to the Irish presents a sort of picture-show of gaiety and adventure, but I think a Mayo man would see less of the humour of the life than, for instance, Dr. George Maguire, the son of a Galway man, who had been away from Claremorris for all his school and college years, with some voyages on a liner thrown in, and a period of hospital work in England. As I write he is serving with the Army in France. We used to wonder how he ever returned to Mayo, but no one need wonder, listening to his soft, sleepy voice, broken with gurgles of delight as he unfolds to you the humours of the races, the fair, the auction, anywhere and everywhere he has come and gone. His sense of the oddities and humours makes life a perpetual delight to him, as it did in the case of my brother-in-law, John O'Mahony. One has to be outside the life to appreciate it fully. He stands outside. Sometimes the stories would not bear repetition, with the chuckle and the gurgle and the soft, sleepy voice left out. Ireland is full of the most wonderful story-tellers. If you ask them to write down what they have told you it becomes very often a dull and lifeless narrative.

The West is not without its purple patches. I have been told that Johnny Ansbro's sister wet-nursed King Edward, amid such circumstances of splendour as lose nothing in the telling. It is certain that King Edward used to get his shooting-suits of homespun made by Regan of Ballinrobe, who died the other day. Regan had a genius for a good cut, and King Edward discovered it when he stayed with Lord Ardilaun at Cong.

Always one comes upon topsy-turviness in Ireland. I heard an Irish peer not so long ago express his disgust at the conduct of a magistrate who inflicted heavy fines for poteen-making, as though he interfered with an ancient and honourable industry. The peer seemed to look upon the magistrate as a horrid sort of new broom. He mentioned that in *his* county the poteen-makers always set aside a certain portion of the brew to be discovered by the police. Word is given of where the brew

is to be found. The police receive a proportion of the fine inflicted. What becomes of the poteen seized nobody knows—perhaps the police do. But the main portion of the brew is intact and every one is pleased. My informant, who is practically a total abstainer himself, thought this a most fair arrangement.

There came one day soon after we had gone into the wilderness an R.I.C. man from Belfast, of some six-foot-four, who described for us some of the ways of Belfast. He gave us fearsome accounts of the fighting quality of Belfast. On the occasion of a big row there was a man in charge of the police new to the job. He believed in the power of persuasion, especially his own. He was called on to read the Riot Act. ‘No, no,’ he said, ‘that will not be at all necessary. I will reason with them and you shall see the result.’ He rode down the street. Immediately he was seen there was a great shout of ‘Here comes the — old horse-peeler !’ and the stones flew. One caught him on the forehead ; another on the cheek. He turned about : ‘Load ! Aim ! Fire !—and be dommed to them !’ That was the only Riot Act read that day in the streets of Belfast.

This R.I.C. man also gave us a very lively account of chasing the rioters. In the great riots of former days, as is well known, the rioters took refuge in the houses. It was the policy of one Government at least to bring up South-of-Ireland police to Belfast for the Twelfth, and they had a holy joy in their work. That, by the way. One of the foremost in the riots—not stone-throwing, but throwing the steel nuts from the ship-building yards, which they stole and secreted for many days before the Twelfth, an absolutely deadly missile in the hands of a Belfast rioter—was pursued by our big police officer. Time and again he had his hand on the fellow and he escaped. Finally the rioter got into an empty house and locked the door behind him. By the time the door was broken in our R.I.C. man arrived only in time to see his quarry disappearing over the wall of the next garden. No use to pursue him further. It

was a rabbit-warren of a place. But there was standing near a big, cracked water-jug. This our big man flung with tremendous force and excellent aim. He heard it *crash* on the disappearing rioter. ‘He remembered me, anyhow,’ he said.

In April of that year we were again in Dublin, to which Lady Aberdeen had returned for the General Meeting of the W.N.H.A. At the Shelbourne we ran up against an old friend, Captain Patrick Butler of the Royal Irish Regiment, Sir William Butler’s eldest son. We had not seen him since early in the century when he had just come back, a slender youth, from the South African War. He told us some stories of Colonel Morris, of the Irish Guards, who was killed on the 1st of September 1914. Before the first battle, Colonel Morris said : ‘We are a new regiment and we’ve got to make our name and have something to put on our colours. I want all the officers to stand up to-day.’ The Irish Guards lost terribly in officers that day.

Again he sent out three hundred men to take a position. ‘Mind,’ he said, ‘I don’t want to see any of you come back.’ Then he went out and died with them. Captain Butler said, ‘He was a very gallant soldier.’

Sir David Harrel had just returned that April from settling some labour trouble in England. I forgot what the trade was—shipbuilding, munition-making—it was something on which the war depended, and every one had been hurling hard names at the men. Sir David said : ‘In one case the men were working all day Friday and Friday night : all day Saturday and Saturday night : on Sunday they had four hours’ sleep, and when they were to begin work again they staggered and reeled like drunken men.’

One beautiful April Sunday morning we were in St. Stephen’s Green with Captain Butler, when there came by a little group of wounded men from St. Vincent’s Hospital. A small, groping man in civilian attire walked between two in the familiar blue hospital garb, his eyes bandaged. Captain Butler spoke to them.

'How are you all doing ?'  
 'Very well, thank you, sir.'  
 'You were wounded—where ?'  
 'At Wipers, sir.'  
 'I, too, was wounded at Wipers. And this poor fellow ?'  
 'Wipers too, sir. Both eyes shot out.'  
 'Ah, I am very sorry.'

He took the blinded man's hand.

'You did very well at Wipers, splendidly.'

'We did our best, sir,' said the blinded man humbly.

Later that day we saw about five hundred of the Irish Volunteers going for one of their route-marches in the Dublin mountains, where they acquired their deadly skill at marksmanship. Easter Week, 1916, was yet more than a year away. A good many people in Dublin believed that the Volunteers were only play-acting—in their ignorance. They swung along, splendid, vigorous fellows, full of life and the joy of life. One, young, tall, golden-haired, flung laughing, defiant glances from side to side. A couple of very small, very insignificant Tommies stood and stared at them from the side-walk.

A young officer home wounded told me of a brother-officer who 'had the doom.' He was the bravest of the brave, and he had volunteered at the beginning of the War, leaving a beloved young wife. From the beginning he had said he would never return. As time went on a great horror and disgust of war grew upon him and deepened ; and always there was 'the doom.' When our friend was wounded he came to see him in hospital and envied him his wound. The young officer said : 'He envied even the dead who were out of it.' At parting they shook hands. 'Well, good-bye,' he said. 'You've been very decent to me ! I shall not see you again.' He was killed within a day or two.

Quite early in the War letters began to come to me from the mourners. A poem of mine in the *Spectator*, 'Flower of Youth,' had apparently caught and held many.<sup>1</sup> Since it first appeared, in the autumn of 1914,

<sup>1</sup> *Flowers of Youth: Poems in War-Time.* London: Sidgwick and Jackson.

it has brought me many hundreds of letters. I believe I have written better poems of the War, or as good, but nothing I have written has approached its popularity. My publishers printed a considerable number of copies as a leaflet, and sold them for the benefit of the Red Cross : but from many parts came, and come, requests from private people to be allowed to print it for distribution. Only this last Christmas an employer of labour in a South of England town distributed a thousand copies anonymously among the bereaved mothers of the town on Christmas Day. The poem has had an extraordinary vogue. The Bishop of London has used it more than once in his sermons. I have not heard of it as delivered from a pulpit of my own Faith, but all the other denominations have had it preached to them, and its popularity shows no tendency to diminish. And while I correct my proofs I read in the *Times* of the 30th December 1918, that the Primate, preaching at Canterbury Cathedral, quoted 'Flower of Youth' as 'a poem adventurous but rich in brave thought.'

When the letters began to arrive in numbers it came to me that that was why I was sent to Mayo and given a leisure and quietness I could not have had elsewhere. Besides my own work, of which I have done a great deal, I computed that at one time I was writing a hundred letters a week to the bereaved of the War. People said that I had the healing touch—blessed gift at such a time—and the discoverers had imparted their discovery to others. It made an immense correspondence, and, as I have never typed, all was written by my own hand. I wrote long letters, and continued to write to each one until the correspondence lapsed easily and naturally, until they had all I could give them.

I had letters from all parts of the world and all manner of people. One came from a woman who had been at my first school with me when we were about eight years old. I won't say how long ago that was. Her father, her husband, and her son had all been in the Connaught Rangers. 'He was born in the regiment,' she wrote of

the son who had been killed in the War. His body had never been found. ‘ You know,’ she wrote patiently, ‘ they had not arrived at that time at their present efficiency in finding the wounded and caring for them. He must have crawled away somewhere to die; and no one found him.’

She recalled vividly my appearance when she had last seen me, as a very fat, rosy little girl with a stutter. The stutter lasted me till well into middle life. How often have I arrived at a hall-door praying to be able to ask, ‘ Is Mrs. —— at home?’ especially if the name began with a W or R. To ask for a railway ticket to Richmond was a terror to me in early London days. It was a difficulty I concealed carefully. I can only tell it now when it has disappeared with the nervousness of youth and early womanhood.

I can recall my old schoolfellow at the age of eight more clearly than I can recall my own children’s faces in absence. She was a very fat little girl, with her heavy hair twisted in ringlets like thick sausages. I can see the very pattern of the comb that held it back, one of the all-round combs of those days with three gilt balls, like the sign of a pawnbroker’s shop, for ornament. They had a tiara-like effect in the golden-brown hair which I much admired.

The late spring and early summer of that year were good, for Mayo. I can still see the clean white of the clove pinks and the blue of the forget-me-nots. We had more society than we have ever had since, and the boys were still at home, and there came the priests and a sporting parson, and one or two families of young people. About the end of that summer the War began to sweep this one and that one away. Some went to come back no more.

From time to time during those three years of Mayo I have ‘ run down,’ and that means a week or fortnight in Dublin. I will say this for Mayo, though one abuses its climate every day, that perhaps nowhere else could one have written for six or eight hours a day, pretty

well more than a thousand days with but infrequent 'running down.'

There was a rather sad visit to Dublin the September of 1915, for Lord and Lady Aberdeen were going to America; and before that there had been Suvla Bay, when blow after blow fell day after day on one's heart. So many of our friends had gone out in the 10th Division to perish at Suvla. For the first time came bitterness, for we felt that their lives had been thrown away and that their heroism had gone unrecognised. Suvla—the burning beach, and the poisoned wells, and the blazing scrub, does not bear thinking on. Dublin was full of mourning, and on the faces one met there was a hard brightness of pain as though the people's hearts burnt in the fire and were not consumed.

We were constantly with Lord and Lady Aberdeen that week, but it was terribly sad. One met the mourners everywhere. One day at Ely House there were two new war-widows at the luncheon-table, and one girl whose brother had been killed. One got to know the look of the new widows—hard, bright eyes, burning for the relief of tears, a high, feverish flush in the cheeks, hands that trembled, and occasionally an uncertain movement of the young head. It was not easy to be happy, even in the lost Paradise which Dublin had come to be to us since we had been in Mayo.

Our dear good friends went off for six months at the most. They were away for nearly three years. We would have come back to Mayo with even heavier hearts that September if we could have foreseen their long absence, if we could have imagined that the War would still be dragging interminably, as it seemed, when all that long time was gone by.

The winter closed in about us. Some time before Christmas the cook had no more sense than to go and get scarlet fever. She went to hospital and we were quarantined. That seemed to be the end of society for us in Mayo, limited as it was before. All that winter no one came to our doors. The children, who were ceasing

to be children, or had ceased except to their mother, used to crowd into my little room for company. The room had been pleasant in summer. With the winter one discovered that to sit with a closed window for five minutes invited asphyxiation. Damp or dry-rot; probably the latter.

One day during that lonely autumn, Toby, who had been saying tentatively, ‘I wish you would let me join up !’ without any response, for it was a fixed idea with us that he was not strong enough, walked into my little room with a new look in his face.

‘Mother,’ he said, ‘will you and father get me a commission ? If you will not I shall enlist.’

So he had settled it. I wrote to General Friend, with whom I had had a casual meeting. He was sent for to go before a Board in Dublin.

While the thing was in suspense he could not rest. It was a dull Christmas, about which I remember little. We were helping an Irish lady in England in a scheme of sending presents to the children of English soldiers from Ireland and vice versa. We pressed all hands into the employment. I don’t think Toby would be pressed. He was too preoccupied. Patrick, working for entrance exam. to Sandhurst, gave us a little unwilling help. ‘Will this do for the kid ?’ I heard him say grumpily one day to his sister. The letter began ‘Dear Sir,’ and ended, ‘Yours faithfully.’ The wording was of the most formal. It was intended for ‘William Cole, aged one.’

On the very last day of the year I heard in the dark of the morning a quick, sudden cry, ‘Mother ! Mother !’ It is a cry I have often dreamt I heard. I lay drowsily, wondering if I had dreamt of that call in Toby’s voice. A little later he was at my door. He had got his commission.

On the last day of 1914 I had finished up my little workaday diary with ‘Lord, my heart is ready !’ I do not know why I wrote it. I never thought then that the War would last long enough for the boys to go.

## CHAPTER XX

### CHIEFLY LORD GREY

ON Sunday the 31st of October 1915, just as the winter darkness was closing about us, there came in—Lord Grey, not any new Lord Grey, but Earl Grey, to light a fire in our chilly room. There was a strange loneliness about that winter for us in the house under the hill, with the premonition of the children's leaving us. Sir David Harrel had said to us, 'The western winter is just a succession of wild Atlantic storms.' It was very dark in that house, and the wild geese flew by overhead in the wild evenings. One's heart was a cold room, when—there came in Lord Grey.

His letter, received that last day of October, was the forerunner of many. He wrote to say how much he liked *Flower of Youth: Poems in War Time*, the volume of verse published that autumn. He had been sending it to many bereaved mothers. Enclosed in the letter was a sheaf of letters from some of them, Lady Frances Balfour, Lady Desborough, Lady Drummond—others—saying what they felt about the poems.

Mentioning Lady Desborough recalls an odd coincidence. When we had gone up to Dublin in September 1915, Pam, who is a great lover of poetry and knows a deal of it by heart, had relieved the tedium of the long, dreary railway journey by repeating poetry. The poem which was most in her mind just then was 'Into Battle,' by Julian Grenfell, who had died of wounds in the preceding May. I could hardly tell how many times she went over the poem without tiring. I remember the amused interest of a very pleasant Englishman who listened and, after a time, talked. We were going to stay with some

friends who had taken a furnished house for the winter. When we went into the charming drawing-room which had a real atmosphere, Pam went up to the picture of a soldier on the wall. It was signed 'Julian Grenfell.'

Later we discovered that many of the volumes in the bookshelves had his name written in them. He had given many books, apparently, to the lady whose tenants our friends were. After two or three discoveries I began guessing, from the subjects of the books, which had been his, or his gift. I was invariably right. I coveted one of those books. It is creditable to my honesty that I did not help myself.

I answered Lord Grey's first letter on a day when a cattle-drive was in progress on the lands of Carradoyne, where we were then living. I wrote him a very long letter about all sorts of things—the day was All Saints' Day—and I had time to be a little alarmed lest I should have been too forward before his answer reached me on December 3rd. He was in winter quarters, and he had had a return of suffering.

I suppose it was not possible for him to rest. Confined to his room as he was and ordered rest, yet he could not keep from lighting fires in cold rooms. He radiated life and energy and warmth.

He was soon interested in the younger boy and girl—I must learn not to call them children—whose reviews in the *Bookman* of Christmas books amused and pleased him. They used to select what they should review from my batch—Pam taking the schoolgirl books, Patrick—Bunny, as we still called him—anything that had a military subject. That year he had reviewed—like an old hand—a couple of books on the Army and the Navy, and I had, much to my own amusement, secretly labelled their contributions 'Post-Scriptum by Pamela,' and 'Post-Post-Scriptum by Bunny.' Pam said that Mother would do *anything*: Patrick, being a philosopher, said nothing at all. I told Lord Grey about it, and about Patrick's correspondence with William Cole, aged one; and soon he began to include them in his benefactions.

He loved to give, spiritually and materially. He always called Patrick 'General Bunny.' He would have liked to see 'General Bunny' doubled up over *Private Spud Tamson* and *The First Hundred Thousand* which he sent him that Christmas. To Pam he gave various volumes of poems—to me miscellaneous books—the last of them *Poems* by Colwyn Phillips, Lord St. David's son, who was killed in action in May 1915. Colwyn Phillips had been A.D.C. to Lord and Lady Aberdeen; he was one of that high company of gallant gentlemen who have passed away in this War, belonging to that wonderful type, the man of action who is also a man of letters, of whom the highest example is Sir Philip Sidney.

Lord Grey wrote to me once that his greatest pleasure in life was to bring kindred spirits together. He loved to send the praises which he had drawn from other people to their object. There was a professor in Montreal who wrote of me as 'Katharine' in an intimacy which I liked. He called Lord Grey 'Dear Excellency,' a manner of address which I liked so much and felt to be so fitting that I longed to adopt it myself. When Lord Grey died that professor's fire must have died out, like many another's, leaving a cold hearth.

Once he knew of our loneliness and isolation he sent us sheaves of things that came to him, which he felt would interest us. There were many things of engrossing interest. There was Charles Lister's great letter to Lady Desborough on the death of Julian Grenfell, which might take its place in any anthology of English prose. There was the story of the Toy Drum, of which Henry Newbolt made a poem, told by one who was there. There was the story of how the submarine E 7 ran up the Bosphorus and shelled Constantinople, told with such dash and fire by a young officer of the E 7 that it ran quite easily into a ballad, which Lord Grey sent the mother of the young officer who, in return, sent me his photograph. The letter got into print as did some others of the things he sent to us, but many were private. How we looked for his letters through that winter !

He was greatly interested in Pam's poetry. One of her poems, 'The Blind Soldier,' he sent secretly to the editor of a big review—I forget its exact title—which represented the Colonies and the Empire. The poem was accepted, but it had already been accepted and put in print by *The Queen*. He was so nice about being ready to 'knock again' for her at that door, though it must have been a little dashing to his kindness when he found the acceptance was in vain. He wrote to her that he was quite sure Julian Grenfell would have loved *her* poetry, which was a great delight to the young poet.

Soon after Toby had gone Patrick followed, to get some coaching for Sandhurst, so there was no longer the dear figure in the corner of the sofa of evenings, gurgling and choking over *Spud Tamson*, now and again trying to impart to others the delights of that classic, attempts which ended in tears of laughter. So there were only three of us, and poor Pam depending for society on a writing mother, who more and more found her way out of Mayo through work and letters. In self-defence Pam was obliged to take to writing too, stories in addition to the poems she had been writing already.

It was then that Lord Grey's letters and enclosures and books came in. They were a constant interest and delight, as he would have wished them to be. Here is a bit about his friends, Pat and Pam, which, I think, he would not mind my quoting. This was written later in the year :

Delighted to hear that General Bunny is as merry as a grig at Sandhurst and is thus, by gaiety of heart, keeping up the traditions of the Irish soldier. As for your Pam, that she should be able to dress herself out of the income earned by her pen, that is splendid. Tell her from me that if I were not planning to go to Petrograd to see my daughter, who has been wounded in the face by a splinter from a hand grenade, I would go to Ireland for the express purpose of seeing the best-dressed young lady in Ireland.

He was by this time out of winter quarters, and had been fishing with 'Dr. Jim' an old friend of his Rhodesian days.

He had written to me that I was to promise not to publish his letters, saying he would not write any more unless I did, and I had given him the promise, but this, I think, he would not mind my quoting, since it is impersonal :

Your love for Prince Charming and the King of Golden Courtesies makes me tell you a little compliment that was paid to his mother by Mrs. Watts (of Limmerlease, near Guildford), a Highland Gael, whom, if you do not know already, you must take another house near Guildford to know, so that you may be able to write another 'Lady of the Manor' chapter. I asked her once if I might bring with me, when I was paying a call from London, Mrs. Wyndham, the matrix of all you love in Prince Charming. She said : ' You will be doubly welcome if you bring her on whom the Sun shines always and the Moon at night. Being curiously ignorant and unread, I knew not the allusion and asked to be enlightened. ' Surely,' said she, ' you are acquainted with Lindsay's *Book of the Saints*, in which the story is told of a certain lady whose dwelling in the forest was always enveloped in a halo of shine. People came from all parts to know why she was the recipient of such divine favours. Did she wear a hair shirt or peas in her shoes or practise any such austeries ? No ; she simply radiated joyousness on all around her, like Mrs. Wyndham.

His last gift to Pamela was a reproduction of the Sargeant portrait of him. It hangs one side of our hearth. On the other side is the portrait of Mr. Wyndham.

May he be receiving joy in Heaven for all he gave on earth !

He was a true friend of Ireland, and loved the Irish. He had been reading my *Reminiscences*, and wrote that as soon as he was free he was coming to Ireland to look for K.T.'s and John O'Mahonys as well as to see the best-dressed young lady. For many years he had been as a voice in the wilderness crying that Federal Home Rule was the solution of Irish troubles. No one heeded him, any more than people heeded the crank or cranks who brought up, year after year, the Daylight Saving Bill in Parliament only to be contemptuously rejected.

But Daylight Saving is an accomplished fact, and a beneficent one ; and the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill, and Votes for Women, and all sorts of discredited things have come to be accepted in these days. (By the way, let me tell how one of my children asked 'Why do they talk of the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill ? Bill isn't a lady's name.')

Lord Grey lived to see the Irish Convention begin and to send it his blessing from what was practically his death-bed. May that blessing even yet bear fruit !

He had a particular affection and admiration for A. E., with whom he had had many discussions of the Irish Question, when during a Dublin visit he put up at Plunkett House. He read all the newest Irish books, and discussed them in his letters. I wish I might have drawn on them. His views were always so interesting, although I think he sometimes overestimated a book because it was Irish. He was very un-English in being undogmatic. In full flow of correspondence I do not think he alluded once to Easter Week, although he was strongly Imperialist. He had an immense *joie de vivre*, as he had an immense interest in all that concerned his kind. He was extraordinarily altruistic, sympathetic, and tolerant, and over all played the lambent gift of humour.

He said to Susan Mitchell, whom he could not persuade to be an Imperialist : 'I shall present you with a map of the British Empire.' She said, 'I shall hang it where I cannot see it.' He replied, 'Then I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that you have the Empire at your back.'

I think he had French blood. He must have had ; he was so quick and vivacious, so cosmopolitan, so very far removed from all we are accustomed to call insular. The warmth of his generous spirit overflowed upon all whom he touched. An essentially splendid and lovable personality. I am very happy to think that upon me and mine, while yet he stayed, fell some measure of his

light and his regard. How many fires must have gone out with his light of life !

That winter at Carradoyne which he helped us through was by far the loneliest, although for some portion of it we still had our children. Oddly enough it has been less lonely without them ; perhaps it is not so odd, seeing that three-fourths of one's heart and soul, or more than that, are out of it and sending back messages from the great world. Perhaps Carradoyne was a house which had the feeling of loneliness and darkness in the winter. To be within hearing of the noise of the railway has made quite a surprising difference, even though the wild geese shun the urbanities of Brookhill, and take their lonely way high up in the sky across the chimneys of Carradoyne. Since we have been inhabitants of Brookhill we have made the amazing discovery that Claremorris, for all its ramshackle look, just misses being a backwater. Castlebar, the county town, Westport, other more important towns than Claremorris, are oppressive with the feeling of the backwater. It must be because Claremorris is a junction, that the tides of life flow through it, North, South, East, and West, that it escapes the deadly feeling of being a backwater of life.

My post-bag grew fuller. When I talk of Lord Grey and the alleviations he brought I must not forget many other faithful friends who sent us news of the world—chief among them Frank Mathew, who wrote his first war bulletin to me about the time the correspondence with Lord Grey began, and has sent his reports faithfully ever since, sometimes twice, in times of rapid movement even thrice, a week. How priceless those letters will be when this War is as old as the Peninsular War !

At least we started with utter enthusiasm for the War and its purposes. One did not know all that would happen, how it would drag and drag, till weariness of it and longing for it to end overcame all other feelings. And, after a few weeks, there was the first leave and the new young officer came back to display himself in his

khaki. I had not been able to be in Dublin to see him make his first appearance, as he wished. A. E. had written to me : 'Toby has been in here, suffering from the intolerable indignity of having to wear civilian clothes till six o'clock this evening.'

We were immensely proud of and pleased with him and he with himself. When he took his next leave he got into mufti at the first possible moment.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE REBELLION

IN the beginning of March we went to Dublin for a fortnight's breath of life after the winter stagnation. It was a perfectly good time, a little clouded at the opening by our young soldier being sent off to Ballykinlar in the north of Ireland : we had hoped he would be in Dublin at Richmond Barracks. Some weeks later I was thanking the Mercy which had sent him to Ballykinlar, and kept him there during the Dublin Rising.

The streets that March were full of serious-looking young men in twos and threes with absorbed faces, walking or talking in groups, whom we put down as Sinn Feiners. One day a Sinn Fein officer in full uniform clanked down Grafton Street to the amazed interest of the other officers in khaki. People were puzzled about Sinn Fein. It was certainly becoming very daring in its appearances and doings. The prevailing opinion was that there was nothing to be afraid about. The good citizens of Dublin for the greater part looked on it as play-acting. Some talked of shirkers, and even of cowards—in their ignorance. Already these young men must have been under stern discipline. The passing crowd sometimes showed what it thought of them. Young ladies stepped aside ostentatiously as they went by. One would have said that the quick Irish blood would have been up, but they did not seem to notice. They were too absorbed in something. Perhaps knowing what they knew the insult passed them by.

Never was such a deceiving, disarming thing as the openness of Sinn Fein that spring. It manoeuvred in the streets, practised street fighting, and brought off a

sham attack on Dublin Castle while the Dublin Metropolitan Police looked on and scratched their heads in bewilderment. How could any one believe in the seriousness of a conspiracy that so flaunted itself?

An old College friend of my husband, an official in a Government Office in London, visited Dublin about that time. He wrote on February 23, 1916—we just missed him in Dublin:—

There is a remarkable difference of opinion among the people I have met as to the importance of the Sinn Fein movement. Some people think it is merely theatrical heroism without risk. Others think it may mean serious business, even to the extent of bomb outrages. I saw a detachment of their Volunteers marching up Grafton Street on Sunday, which inclined me to the former view. First an advanced guard of cyclists and foot-men beautifully uniformed and armed to the teeth, carefully scouting down King Street and along the Green, in case of an ambuscade, leading you to expect that a regiment of a thousand or so was following. Then the main body headed by eight pipers in saffron kilts, but consisting of twenty men only, in all sorts of costumes, a few carrying arms, but most of them poor specimens, all taking themselves very seriously.

One of those evenings in March we went to the Abbey Theatre where the plays were Yeats' *Kathleen ni-Houlihan* and the *Mixed Marriage* of Mr. St. John Ervine. We had with us a young Hussar officer and our boy up from Ballykinlar. In the next seats to ours were an officer and his wife who were staying at the Shelbourne, as we were. There was a fair amount of khaki through the house; and although people took it for granted that there would be a strong element of Sinn Fein amongst the Abbey audience, I don't think any one had cause to feel uncomfortable because of the coat he wore.

But the politics of the mass of the audience were pretty evident. The curtain went up for *Kathleen ni-Houlihan*. There came the Little Old Woman creeping up to the cottage door, calling the bridegroom from the bride, the one that heard from the warm hearth-fires

and all that men love and desire, from softness and pleasure and success and ease to the hard path her lovers must tread. You could have heard a pin drop in the house. Then came :

They shall be remembered for ever ;  
They shall be living for ever ;  
They shall be speaking for ever ;  
The people will hear them for ever ;  
They have no need for prayers : they have no need for prayers.

The gallery and the back of the house broke into tumultuous cheers and clapping of hands, and the soldiers in khaki looked on wondering.

A month went by, six weeks ; and one morning there were no letters—a disquieting and annoying circumstance in a household which lived on its letters. The postman had left a mysterious message to the effect that there were no letters ; there might be none for a week ; there was ‘a row up in Dublin.’

‘A cock-and-bull story !’ I said sharply, out of my disappointment at getting no letters : ‘the line is under water’ ; for, of course, there had been the usual deluge before the magnificent weather which hung the gold and blue as a background for the tragedy of Easter Week.

But that day as the dull hours passed the sense of calamity travelled by the earth and the air and the wind and the water. Out on the bog-road, where the slender trees looked down at their images in the water, we talked to the man at the level crossing. He, too, was an exile. He came from Nobber in Meath. No trains had passed through since Saturday : Sunday was a *dies non*. Perhaps it was a strike on the railway.

The silence of the country, without the occasional railway whistle, ached. You felt as though the earth listened, the Little Old Woman, perhaps, listening with her heart.

The next day and the next, the rumours came thick and fast. And with them Fear : Fear, not of Sinn Feiners, but of a possible German invasion. One

imagined the spiked helmets coming in a line above the tops of the hedgerows. There would be the mountains for refuge, but not so near as at Shankill : the nearest mountains were seventeen miles away, and every one would be making for them, and there would be the question of food. The bogs—if one knew them well enough, there was safety in the bogs and destruction for the enemy ; not knowing them, there might be a quagmire and a slow, living grave for the one who sought to escape that way.

The boy who was going to Sandhurst, and was due there within the week, went up and down to Claremorris incessantly looking for news of trains. Every one was on tenterhooks and restless. I, as I have done at even a sadder time in my life, sat down and wrote. Oddly enough, I was writing of the other Rebellion. I had begun *Lord Edward, a Study in Romance*, some five days before the outbreak of the Rebellion of 1916.

I went on with it. I am sure the sight of me sitting there, writing as usual, steadied the nerves of the household. I was surrounded by Rebellion books—the other Rebellion, when every rebel carried writing materials in his knapsack instead of the baton of a Field-Marshal. I had *Holt's Narrative*, *Tone's Journal*, *Teeling's Narrative*, *Cloney's Rebellion in the County of Wexford*, with all the Fitzgerald books. Now and again the boy or girl sat and read this strange apposite literature. And always, while I wrote, the wonder was upon me, the incredible thing that I should have lived to see another Irish Rebellion.

I think the first rumour of a Sinn Fein Rebellion reached us on the Tuesday afternoon, but the days passed, and the Sinn Feiners had not at all emerged from the fog and the terror of the silent hours. I did not associate this wild melodrama with gentle, smiling Thomas MacDonagh, hat in hand and bowing politely, as I remembered him. Nor with Pearce, of whom I had heard but vaguely as a schoolmaster of ideals ; it would have seemed a mad thing to think of that shadowy

youth, Joseph Plunkett, whom I remembered as a baby, a commandant of the Irish Republican Army. Yet the week was not over before some one said to me : ‘ This will be a terrible thing for the Plunketts.’

I had wrung my hands before that over what I foresaw. I remembered mornings long ago in the Land League days, and the days of the Invincibles, when one prayed not to wake till late because there was a hanging at Kilmainham Jail, which was only a good stretch of country road and a few fields away from the home of my girlhood, so that with the wind in that quarter one might have heard the tolling of the dead bell.

‘ There will be all that over again,’ I said, little knowing that the sons of old friends and people I had met in ordinary social life were of those who were going to die.

Mayo is given to minding her own business. Having given birth to the Land League and accomplished that Revolution, Mayo has ever since been quite well content to rest on her laurels. A ‘ strong ’ farmer came away from his tillage one of those days to ask us for news. ‘ And now we shall get no more money for Land Purchase,’ he said sorrowfully. ‘ Was ever anything so uncalled for ? ’

The little war up in Dublin left Mayo as unmoved as the Great War—in our part of it. I stopped an old man coming from the fair one of the early days to ask if he had heard any news. One asked news of everybody, in those strange days when we seemed to be enclosed, shut away from the world, as though by a wall. He answered that he had never known a worse fair for pigs : there were no buyers. I asked him if any news had come in from Dublin. He said irascibly that if I ‘ d talk aisy and stop bawlin’ he might know what I was talkin’ about. I tried not to bawl and he arrived at some understanding of my question, ‘ Oh, aye,’ he said, ‘ bad work, bad work,’ and he went on his way.

The woman at another level-crossing, when the Rebellion was sinking down into its ashes, remarked that it was a terrible thing : it had stopped the fairs all over

the country, the people couldn't get their pigs to Limerick ; and another woman asked : ' Isn't it a desperate situation them villains have made for us ? the man that comes collectin' eggs is stopped, an' I 've five score on me hands.'

On Monday, the 1st of May, we motored to Tuam. We were not sure that we should not be held up on the way. But all went smoothly, and it was an enchanting day. In Tuam we found a different point of view concerning the Rebellion, although they did not talk freely, because of my husband's official position : but their silence was eloquent. They did not consider it as a matter of fairs and markets. They are quite a different people once you cross the imaginary boundary-line between Mayo and Galway.

At Tuam we succeeded in getting the *Daily Sketch* and another English illustrated paper. But already news had begun to come through. The local paper had a long tale of the events in Dublin, fairly accurate, as it proved.

One of these days the boy and girl met on the road a motor car containing three nuns, which was being driven very fast by a man obviously a gentleman, who slowed down to ask them the way, and being told, went on at great speed. At first our imaginings went no further than that they were refugee nuns, from perhaps Athenry, where things were rather desperate. Later on hearing tales of Liam Mellows and his hair-breadth escapes we began to wonder. Mellows will occupy a sort of Robin Hood place in the Irish popular mind by and by, if he does not occupy it already.

One day during the Terror a frightened old lady arrived at one of the small western hotels. She was so terrified of Sinn Fein that she shook as in a palsy when she was spoken to. The people were very sorry for her, and did their best to comfort her. She kept to her room for the whole of her stay. In the end she went hurriedly, having apparently recovered her self-control ; but it was the wild disorder in which her room was left that set her hosts furiously to think.

An English colonel at the Shelbourne told Barry O'Brien, who told it to us, this tale. His daughter was motoring in the West of Ireland, driving her own car, when the Rebellion broke out. She drove right into the midst of Mellowes' men and was captured and her car commandeered. She was with them a day and a night, during which she was treated with the most perfect courtesy and consideration. At the end of that time Mellowes himself arrived. He made profuse apologies for the inconvenience the action of his men had caused her. He asked if she had any complaint as to her treatment and she answered, none. He said, ' You are perfectly free to go now. If there was any chance of your listening to me I should make a request, which, of course, I have no power of enforcing.' ' What is it ? ' ' That for twenty-four hours after your leaving us you give no information that may lead to our arrest.' ' I promise that,' she said.

Barry O'Brien asked : ' Was she very much frightened ? '

' You may believe that I was,' the father replied. ' But she, not at all. She said they behaved perfectly.'

The first letter to reach me, censored, was from Lady Wemyss, Lord Edward's great-granddaughter. It bore date Easter Sunday. On that calamitous day, her son, Lord Elcho, fell at Katia in the desert of Sinai. I had written to her and to Colonel Wyndham on the Easter Monday before we knew that anything had happened. He wrote in the following week that my letter, censored, of course, had been the first letter to reach him from Ireland.

The boy who was due at Sandhurst at the end of April got away a week late. As his boat went off from the North Wall where he had arrived after many adventures, a solitary shot rang out from where an isolated rebel was still sniping.

A priest who went up to Dublin on the Easter Monday, and was shut up there during the Rebellion week, was in great request when he got back again to Claremorris. He must have been tired of telling his story over and

over, but he was very good natured about it. After he had told it to us, which he did the day following his return, I wrote it out as nearly as I could remember. He had not begun to get weary of it by constant repetition and, since we hung on his words, he had so much encouragement to tell the strange tale with spirit and vivacity.

## CHAPTER XXII

### A PRIEST'S STORY

ON Easter Monday Father Michael and myself went up to Dublin to see poor Father C—— who is lying very ill in the hospital in Leeson Street. We went by the 9.15 train which reaches the Broadstone at 2.30. As we intended to return the next night we had only hand-bags with us.

Nothing at all happened till we reached the Broadstone, but I heard a porter cursing the Sinn Feiners. As soon as we got out of the train some people came up to us and said, ‘I wouldn’t advise you, Father, to go down into the city at all. There’s some terrible bad work going on there. Ye’d better wait for the next train back to the West.’

Well, we didn’t know what they meant at all, but, of course, we were up to see poor C—— and we weren’t going back without seeing him. There wasn’t a cab or a car to be seen—that was the first queer sign—so we just set out to walk, thinking we would pick up a tram on the way. We hadn’t gone far before we met a very respectable-looking young man, and he said to us much what the people at the station had said, bidding us to go back for there was bad work in the streets. ‘What is it?’ we asked, ‘a riot?’ ‘Something of the kind,’ said he. ‘They were firing off a lot of rifles at the Post Office a while ago, but they’ve stopped now.’

We thanked him, but we said we’d got to see a sick friend, and we went on, wondering at the emptiness of the streets. There wasn’t a tram running or any other vehicle. But when we got into Sackville Street we saw a great crowd on before us all round the Post Office,

and extending as far as the Hammam Hotel where I always put up. There was nothing else in the street, but a few soldiers here and there, and in the middle of the street three or four dead horses lying. Now and again there came a foot passenger hurrying along, and every one of them said the same thing : ‘ For the Love of God turn back. There’s terrible work going on in Dublin to-day.’

We went on towards the Hammam, but I wasn’t long in finding out that the crowd in front of me was a very bad one ; the slums of Dublin were out, and on for mischief. So we thought it the best thing to turn back and take rooms at the Gresham. We had a meal there, and then we set off to visit our poor friend. No one at this time seemed to know what was up. Every one was asking the other, and no one at all guessed at the real seriousness of the matter, thinking it was only a street row, and that the worst of it was over.

We avoided the Post Office, going round by the side streets, which were very quiet, and once we left Sackville Street behind us the town was as quiet as possible till we got to Stephen’s Green, where there was a barricade of tramcars and motor cars and such things from Grafton Street corner across to the gate of the Green with the arch over it ; and there we saw the Sinn Feiners in uniform standing by the barricade and guarding the path where it was left open. They didn’t hinder us passing and were very civil and respectful. So we went on and spent a couple of hours talking and laughing with poor C——, and cheering the poor fellow up.

It was about 5.30 when we left him. As we walked back we could see the Sinn Feiners in the Green digging themselves in ; but we didn’t even know yet what was happening till we turned into Grafton Street and saw the looting going on. It wasn’t as bad there as it was in Sackville Street ; but the way of it was you’d see a group of men and women coming along, and suddenly a man would take out a stone and smash a window, and then they’d all begin to smash and drag out handfuls of

whatever it might be, jewellery or boots or toys or anything else. There was something horrible about it. There wasn't a creature to interfere with them, and they looked an uncommonly nasty lot, so we walked along in the middle of the street and no one minded us. Once a couple of men in the Sinn Fein uniform came along and they looked at the crowd with disgust in their faces, and I saw one of them snatch a handful of jewellery from a fellow and fling it in the roadway. It was as if, being out for a big thing, they asked themselves if it was for such people they were doing it.

We got back the quiet way again, and I said to Father Michael as we walked along, that as we'd seen poor C—— we'd better get home that night instead of waiting for the next day, but when we got back to the hotel we found the doors closed. They opened to let us in, but as soon as we'd got in we were told that the place was closed for the night, and there was no getting out again.

The night was quiet enough except for a rifle shot now and again, and the morning was so quiet that I was able to slip up to Eccles Street and say my Mass. That was the last time I was out till the following Monday.

Through the day troops kept arriving, but it was pretty quiet at our end of the street, though the looting had been going on all night, the police having withdrawn from the streets and no one to hinder the looters. But, of course, as we were not allowed to leave the hotel, we could see nothing of that. Some time that evening a knocking came at the door and there entered a sergeant and four soldiers. We all had to appear before him. 'I am very sorry,' he said, 'to be so unfriendly, but, till I know all about you, you are under suspicion.' There were about a hundred guests in the hotel, many of them English people over for the holiday. As soon as he had satisfied himself he gave the word to his men, and they dropped down in the hall, just as they were, and slept like logs.

They were the only people in the place that did sleep.

The noise that broke out in the night was beyond all description : and it became worse the next morning when the gun-boat was bombarding Liberty Hall. That night the looting went on fast and furious.

I had a front room and I made good use of the window, although no one was supposed to look out, and the blinds were drawn. Tuesday night we were all forbidden to sleep at the front, so I took my mattress and laid it on the floor in Father Michael's room and got what sleep I could there. Our guard had got up on the roof and were hiding among the chimney-pots sniping now and again. There was one young lad, a terribly wild lad, maybe you know him, he is the son of — K.C. (We did know him. He was at an English public school with our boys.—K. T. H.) and he enlisted when the war broke out. The sergeant was heart-scalded with him. He couldn't be kept out of danger, only exposing himself everywhere, and the sergeant said if he took his eye off him maybe it is out in the street he'd be—and as time went on to be in the street was certain death, for the guns were firing from the Rotunda, and they were firing from O'Connell Bridge, and it was just a rain of death all the time.

I 'll tell you some of the sights I saw from my window, for all that I was forbidden to look out. I saw three men suddenly come out from Britain Street and stand on the edge of the pathway near the Parnell statue. They looked as if they were strangers and confused, and asking each other questions. There came a volley and the whole three were on their faces stone dead. I saw poor old John O'Duffy killed. He came hurrying along the pathway, wearing his top-hat, like a man in a dream. There wasn't a thing in the street but himself and the dead horses and the fire from the guns. 'My God !' shouted I, 'is the man mad ?' I 'd hardly said it when he went down. I heard he was looking for his favourite grandson and couldn't be kept in. Another thing I saw, and stuck at the window to see it, was the shelling of the houses opposite—the Y.M.C.A. and the

Richmond Institute for the Work of the Blind—where a most persistent sniper was on the roof picking off every soldier that came in sight. From the Rotunda end of the street there came an armoured motor-car ; it made observations and went away. Then came a machine-gun, and I saw the men digging up a place for it in the roadway. Soon after that the shelling of the city began, but before that I left the window. Afterwards I saw the ruin the shells had made ; but we were getting used, by this time, to the terrible noises that shook the place till every minute you 'd expect it down about your ears.

Thursday night was the worst of all, for it seemed that the whole city was on fire. Outside the windows everything was red, with great columns of black smoke ascending to the sky. The houses at the corner of Earl Street were burning, and there was a strong south wind blowing all that day. When there was a sudden gust of wind the flames licked by your window and went off again. We gave ourselves up for lost. I never saw a stranger sight than I saw that night. All day the Catholic ladies had been coming to me and Father Michael asking to go to Confession, and we explaining to them that, not belonging to the Dublin Diocese, we had no faculty to hear Confessions, though we could give Absolution if the necessity arose. The manager had got through a message to the Fire Brigade, but they had answered that their men had been shot at that day driving the engines and they would not expose them again. All the women were on their knees in the billiard-room saying the Rosary, and the queerest thing of all was to see the English and Scotch ladies, who were Protestants and Presbyterians, down on their knees with the Catholics joining in as far as they knew how. There was certain death in the street, but we were in the mind to do something desperate, when, by the Mercy of God, the wind changed at about eleven o'clock.

We were on very short commons by the end of the week—a slice of tinned meat, dry bread, and tea without

milk was served out during the day. The air of the place was very bad, for you must know, with all these people shut up, not a door nor a window had been opened during the week, and, tight as everything was, the stench of the dead horses seemed to creep through—they were a horrible sight by this time, for the sun had been blazing hot for several days.

On Saturday I saw the surrender of the rebels at the Post Office. Oh no, before that I must tell you, I had seen eight men pass from the burning buildings about Earl Street across the street to the Post Office. You know the width of Sackville Street. And it was swept by gun-fire from end to end. Suddenly I saw them scurry out and run like rabbits. The guns blazed. One fell, but picked himself up again and followed the others. They all got safely as far as I could see.

The surrender—well, somehow I thought it a terribly sad thing. The Sinn Feiners were lined up by the Post Office. There was a firing party at each end, and soldiers scattered about among the rebels. They came forward, took off their bandoliers, and laid them down in a heap, laid down their arms, and went back again. There were old men there and there were boys in knicker-bockers. Some of them couldn't have been fourteen. I knew what their madness would have cost us, had cost us, but I could have cried like a child.

The next morning I got up early and went downstairs. In the hall I met the sergeant. He was a fine, pleasant fellow, and we all liked him. Everything seemed very quiet after the noises of the last few days. ‘Are you going out, sir?’ he asked. ‘I am going to the Cathedral to say my Mass,’ I replied. ‘If you ’ll wait I shall give you a guard of my men.’ ‘Oh no, thank you,’ I said, ‘I don’t want a guard.’ For the queer thing was, you seemed to have grown so used to death that you didn’t care a bit about your own skin.

The streets were very quiet as I passed through them, only here and there you had to step aside to avoid a dead man. The ruin and destruction of the place was

borne in on me suddenly. I had an inclination, like an animal, to howl and scream. It was as if my mind was going from me with the terror of the sight I saw.

However, I conquered myself and went on. Entering the Cathedral by the sacristy, the first thing I saw was a little girl fast asleep on the vesting-table. I didn't disturb her. When I went out to say my Mass I saw men and women all fast asleep lying about the altar. They were everywhere, under the seats, and in the gangways, all dead asleep. There was hardly any congregation. Indeed I don't know if there was any. I said my Mass before a congregation all dead asleep. They were starving and exhausted, the creatures! There were a couple asleep under the altar while I said my Mass.

Another thing. We travelled back with an English officer: there were one or two others, very pleasant and kindly. This one told how he had captured a Sinn Feiner, and was so much interested in his prisoner and the splendid fight he had put up, that he asked him if he would join the Army, that if he would, he would try to see him through. 'I fear I may have been going outside my province,' he said apologetically. 'I don't know that I could have done it, but I should have tried.' "I can't see that it would be right to join the Army," the Sinn Feiner answered, "but we'll argue it out. If you can beat me in the argument I'll join." There wasn't much time to argue it, but I said one or two things and he pondered them, and then he said, "No, I can't do it." So I had to send him off to the barracks. I could have hugged that man.'

On the other hand a man came to the Broadstone when we were there. He looked very sullen and downcast as he asked for the officer in charge. 'What do you want?' the officer asked sternly. 'To give information.' 'You're a Sinn Feiner?' 'Yes.' 'I'm an Englishman and I hate a traitor. Go over there with your information.' He was a white blackbird. They were all saying that there were no informers among the Sinn Feiners.

I forgot to tell you that at the corner of Leeson Street and the Green we met an old man and a little boy. ‘You’re a priest, Father?’ he said. ‘I am,’ said I. ‘I want to get into the Castle,’ said he, ‘if you go with me they’ll let me in.’ ‘What do you want to do at the Castle? I am only a country priest. They would not let me in.’

‘ ’Tis the poor boys,’ he said, and burst into tears. ‘They’re in the Post Office. They’re the best boys ever stepped. If I could get into the Castle and tell them about the boys . . . they wouldn’t maybe . . . be too hard on them.’

I’d have given anything to help him, but, sure, what could I do? A poor country priest! God help him! I wonder what became of the boys?

## CHAPTER XXIII

### AFTER THE REBELLION

I BELIEVE, after all, we learnt more about the Rebellion than those who were in Dublin at the time. Of course, one must always miss seeing the thing by one's own eyes : but beyond that all our friends wrote to us of their experiences, and when we went up to Dublin in June they came and told us long stories, so that we got it from every point of view.

In Mayo people had gone back to their buying and selling after the first hubbub was over. I had gone on with my writing : there was nothing else to be done : but I can safely say that the Rebellion, for many weeks, was never out of my thoughts. The shootings, the deportations, the peculiar trouble as it affected me personally, were with me all day, going on at the back of my mind as I wrote, lying down with me, haunting my dreams, rising up with me, treading the daily round with me : I was Rebellion-ridden.

Some one was reported to have said to Sir John Maxwell that, during the week of the Rebellion, Ireland and England had never been so near together : the Rebellion was unpopular : but that, after three weeks of his régime, the countries were never so fatally set apart.

I had lived eighteen years in England. I had come to believe that affection for England and love of Ireland could quite well go hand in hand. I was enthusiastically pro-Ally. Both my boys were pledged to the War—by their own choice. They had grown up to adore Ireland without ever doubting that they might have an affection for the country in which they were born. During those years of English life we had never suffered because we

were Irish. On the contrary, most of the people we had met with, in literary and Bohemian circles, or those who were interested in the Arts, always made much of us because we were Irish. For many years every friend and acquaintance we had possessed an Irish grandmother, or said they did. When we went to live in the country, where the local aristocrats were cousins of the Wyndhams and Lord Edward's great-granddaughters, we rapped sharply over the knuckles such middle-class persons as spoke in a superior manner of Ireland.

To me any bloodiness between England and Ireland was unthinkable. All that belonged to the bad old days. And here was '98 come again, and the people who were my own people were being shot and deported by the people with whom we had lived in amity and affection for eighteen long years. I had always been on the side of my own people. The children had wrangled with Unionist ladies and clergymen at Shankill over the Irish question, almost to bitterness. They had worn the Green, even flaunting it, during the English life. They had trailed their coats when occasion arose. If one may smile when one is telling of the enormous tragedy of the Easter-Week Rebellion, it is at a memory of a tug-of-war between English and Irish children, when the great-great-grandchildren of Lord Edward chose the English side and ours headed the Irish side and refused to be conquered by numbers, or to die. It was the complaint of the other children, 'These Irish will not die,' when there had been a mimic battle with bows and arrows. Moreover, a day or two later, they were discovered holding the innocent children of the Vicar in duress in a coal-house, till they declared they were Irish, which they were not.

We had grown up to the love of Ireland; and now came this sharp, bitter cleavage, in which, with incredible rapidity, the great body of the Irish were massing themselves in a hostility against England—and England, a great part of her, against Ireland.

It was a tragedy many shared with us.

We had had to send Pamela away. She had taken a grue, and it was almost impossible to think or talk of anything else but the Rebellion. So we sent her off for change of air and scene till we could follow her.

The early summer was beautiful. Some time in June our solitude was broken by a visit from a friend who was on her way to the Lough Derg Pilgrimage. It was the loveliest time of the year, when the pinks were at their whitest and the trees at their greenest and everything at its cleanest and freshest. The pinks were smelling so sharply sweet that one's sleep was drenched with the scent. My husband went off to a court at Achill which kept him out one night, and I had my friend to myself. It was warm enough to sit out till 11 o'clock, which it is not often in Western Ireland, and we sat talking under the dim trees with the masses of pinks blurred to a broad white strip, as it might be a linen web meandering and waving all around us in every direction, a Milky Way.

My friend was the first, except the Claremorris priest, to tell me her personal experience of the Rebellion. Her brother had been arrested, like a good many other people whose only offence was their being in the streets. He was a person of an academic mind and, being haled before an officer and asked if he was a Sinn Feiner, he replied, quite truthfully, that he was not. Asked, if he had sympathy with the Sinn Feiners, he set out to explain quite leisurely certain reasons why he was in sympathy with the Sinn Fein ideas of self-dependence ; but it was no time for academic discussions, and, at about the third word, he was marched off to Richmond Barracks. There his sister found him after a week, during which she had tramped Dublin with motherly solicitude seeking him high and low—he was the delicate one of the family, and but newly out of an illness.

There was no rancour in the things she said. Her delicate Spanish face, with the beautiful eyes, glimmered in the dusk of the lawn, under the lime branches. She had sometimes fared ill in her search, although she had a letter from Sir Matthew Nathan, the Under-Secretary,

commending her to loyal consideration. Some of the officers were uncivil, but the soldiers were ‘ nice little boys ’—that was her phrase for them.

She told me many things which I shall not re-tell here, before we got away from the tragic and harassing topic to her goal, the Pilgrimage. She had a hope that I would accompany her there, but that was vetoed. It was not the first time she had made the Pilgrimage, nor would it be the last. Those who make the Pilgrimage long to make it again, because of the amazing, incredible peace which comes down upon them who have made it.

The Lough Derg Pilgrimage might be recommended to busy people, worldlings, politicians, men with big businesses, fine ladies, generals, doctors, lawyers, all manner of people whose nerves are fretted by long strain. It goes on from early summer till the 15th August every year on the island in Lough Derg known as St. Patrick’s Purgatory. There the saint entered Purgatory from a grotto where he prayed, and travelled through that country which is the shadow, *umbra*, of Heaven. There is a church on the island and hostels for the pilgrims and a tiny shop, and very little else except the pilgrims, who come over in boat-loads from the mainland all through the summer, an ever-flowing stream. The island is so small and so crowded up with the church and the hostels and the pilgrims that they are all on the edge of falling into the lake, and as they make the ‘ stations,’ or ‘ beds’ where St. Patrick is supposed to have rested and left the print of his feet, they are crowding upon each other—fine ladies and gentlemen, shop-assistants, professional men, working people—all the classes meet at St. Patrick’s Purgatory.

The Pilgrimage is really arduous, but the very old and the very young of all classes are to be found there. At the entrance to the Island you doff your foot-covering and go barefoot till you leave it. The ‘ beds’ are hollows in the rock, hard to tread and very slippery. There is sand and there is mud and water-weeds. ‘ It was wet weather when last I did the pilgrimage,’ said Anita, ‘ and

one was so grateful for the wet sand and the little pools after the sharp rocks. Every one was so kind and gentle and careful, else they would have been treading on your bare heels, we were so close together.

Besides the performance of the ‘stations’ there is a whole night of watching in the church, with rigorous fasting. For twenty-four hours nothing must pass the pilgrim’s lips except an occasional sip of ‘Lough Derg Wine,’ which is the lake water. It is supposed to have the most wonderful effects of refreshing and invigorating. Outside the rigorous fast there is an austere diet of bread and lake-water—some three days of it. ‘But oh,’ said Anita, ‘when you leave the island and are going back on the boat to the mainland you feel that you have spent four days in Heaven, and when you look round on the faces of your fellow passengers you feel that they have been there too.’

The worldling would say it was light-headedness after the fasting. But the pilgrims tell you the air is most wonderful blowing from the lake and its encircling mountains, and that the lake water is better than any wine trodden out by the feet of man.

‘I would always send any one in trouble to Lough Derg,’ says Anita. ‘You see the Pilgrimage has been going on so many hundreds of years, and all the prayers ever said there seem to be gathered into the air of the place, and all the faith and hope and love.’

Then she went on to tell me of the miracles. She dwelt most on the miracles of the spirit, the griefs healed, the rough ways made smooth, the light in darkness, the uplifting. I am writing from memory and not remembering so well events of two years ago as I should perhaps of twenty years ago, which is a sign of age, I am told. The one miracle I remember of a more tangible kind had taken place when last she had made the Pilgrimage. A girl had slipped in going round the stations and broken her wrist. There were no appliances on the island, and she obstinately refused to return to the mainland to have the broken wrist set till she had finished the

Pilgrimage. Some one bound up the wrist with an improvised bandage soaked in the lake water. When at last she got surgical aid and the wrist was unbandaged there was no sign of injury of any kind.

We went up to Dublin on a beautiful June day, passing with joy from the bareness and monotony of the great bog which stretches nearly all the way from the West coast to the lush greenness and the distant mountains of County Dublin. People had said to us, ‘ You will cry when you see Sackville Street’ ; numbers of people had cried at their first sight of it after the burning.

I did not feel inclined to cry. I looked curiously and with a sense of aloofness at the ruined city, the hollows behind the shattered windows as though a skull grinned, the occasional high bit of wall standing up like a jagged tooth. What I felt was the something sinister that was released or came to life out of the ruins. People said that at first there was a positive stench. There were whispers of bodies under the ruins. Whether such or any remains of them came to light I never heard. But something escaped. Something of suspicion, of menace, of fear has been in the air of Dublin since Easter Week. No sooner am I come to the old town that I love as if it were human than I feel the chilly and subtle miasma that makes me afraid and distrustful.

Depression came down upon us with Dublin, and the Shelbourne, which had always been so cheerful. The windows yet retained the irregular star-shaped marks of the bullets, a sinister reminder of what had happened. When we went upstairs to our bedroom facing the Green, there was a little comedy going on outside. A number of small children carrying streamers of the yellow, white and green tied to sticks for flag-poles, were piping ‘ Who fears to speak of Easter Week ? ’ Now and again an enormous Dublin Metropolitan policeman gave them chase amid shrill peals of laughter from the children—after which they formed up and the same thing was acted over again.

We hardly smiled, although it was funny. In the

morning we awoke to the whistling of a window-cleaner. The tune he whistled was the forbidden one ; of course it *might* have been ‘Who Fears to speak of ’98,’ the rebel song of Dr. J. K. Ingram of Trinity College which had had no more rebel significance before the Rising than Moore’s Melodies or ‘The Wearin’ o’ the Green,’ but of course, as there were no words and ‘Who Fears to Speak of Easter Week’ is sung to the same air, one could not tell.

We sat down to dinner at the next table to Mrs. T. P. O’Connor and George Moore. Mrs. T. P. soon came and joined us. I believe Mr. Moore was quite willing to do the same. He showed an interest in our party while he stayed and he deplored to Mrs. T. P. his ‘crossness’ about a permission when I was editing the Cabinet of Irish Literature, but it was not the ‘crossness’ which made me avoid Mr. Moore’s considering gaze, as though he was about to descend upon us. Mrs. T. P. said he had *such* a feeling for my religious poetry. Well—perhaps he had. Queer things happen.

Feeling was very excited. There was something feverish about every one. The Celtic Irish laughed while they told you the most tragic and pitiful things, a laughter which had tears in it. The Anglo-Irish Unionists one met were very bitter. They did not think enough men had been shot. They would have shot every one of them—and so on.

Over in the Green there were the shallow trenches which the rebels had thrown up while they held the Green—I was told afterwards that they were only for the sentries who commanded the approaches—covered up like graves.

In the days that followed we went over all the ground of the Rebellion. We had peculiar facilities. The two areas in which the fight had been hottest were Ball’s Bridge and North King Street. In the latter narrow street there was desperate fighting. It took the troops thirty hours to gain a hundred and twenty yards of the street, hand-to-hand fighting, all the time.

Close by North King Street are the church and

monastery of the Capuchins, the special priests of the poor in Dublin. Attached is the Father Mathew Hall which provides a meeting and recreation-place for the people. In Dublin you meet the friars walking about in their habits as in a foreign city ; unfortunately, as a concession to the climate they wear boots and carry umbrellas—a sad tumble-down from the picturesque.

A great friend of ours, Father John, had rashly gone off on the American Mission in May 1914. Up to that time we had had many visits from him and Father José, a Spanish aristocrat and scholar, who had come to the Dublin house of his Order to consult some ancient records in the library of the Franciscans on Merchants' Quay. Velasquez might have painted Father José. After 'John,' as he called him, left, he drifted away to Oxford, saying mournfully that he did not like 'the Churches Street without John.'

Father John, who is a chaplain in Palestine now, I met with in this way. In the first winter of our return, while we were at Dalkey, I went into the church one morning for Mass. There was a 'Mission' going on. A Mission sermon is usually very strong meat, designed to bring sinners to repentance, and I resigned myself to listen, or not to listen. To my delight and amazement the sermon was simple, tender, and full of unction, using the term in its theological sense. The subject was Prayer. There was not a threat nor a lurid hint in the quite short and very much to the point discourse. I called into a shop afterwards and, during a friendly chat, spoke of the sermon. 'Oh, it was Father John,' said the good women ; 'you ought to have heard Father William. The people here wouldn't be bothered listening to Father John, he's too quiet.' 'Quiet' in the Irish sense means gentle, or mild. I know the people expect a Mission sermon to be hot and strong and feel defrauded if they don't get it.

That afternoon Father John came to call, and I told him of my experience. He capped the tale with one of his own. One of those Mission mornings an old lady, deliciously

harrowed by a lurid sermon, fainted. Father John, who was 'off' that morning, assisted to bring her round. The first thing she said when she recovered consciousness was : 'Sure I wouldn't have minded if it was the bad preacher's day, but wasn't it too bad for me to lose the half of the good preacher's sermon.'

Father John was a great tennis-player. It used to be a sight to see him playing in his habit on a hot summer day. Once, to the scandal of an English convert lady, he took off his little skull-cap and flung it on the grass. 'Oh, but,' said she, 'they are supposed never to take off their cappas. He cannot be aware of what he has done.' However, the Catholic born did not share her concern.

Well, the War came, and there was Father John stuck in America, and he the very ideal man for a chaplain, being very human and a man of the world, so to speak, very tolerant and with a delightful sense of humour. Some time in 1915, when the need for chaplains was urgent, I told my Pamela to write to Father John for me and tell him to come home. He replied by return : 'If you can get me taken on as a chaplain I will come.' I wrote to Cardinal Bourne and received an encouraging reply : subject to the consent of his Superior the chaplaincy was his. I sent on the letter, and when we were at the Shelbourne in that March of 1916, I received a cablegram : 'Sailing Monday. John.'

He got back just in time for the Rebellion and chaplain's work in the streets of Dublin, where he little expected it.

The Father Mathew Hall had been used as a Red Cross Hospital during the Rebellion Week. The dark stains were still on the boarded floor the day we were there, while in a room off the hall the competitions for the little 'Feis'—*i.e.* festival of music, singing, and poetry like the Welsh Eisteddfod—which is held every year at the Father Mathew Hall, were going on. The competitors were small children, some of them wearing the yellow, white, and green, oddly, in many cases, side by side with the regimental button of a soldier father.

Pretending ignorance we asked one small boy what the knot of ribbon meant. ‘Irish Republican colours, ma’am,’ he answered. I had already been rebuked for talking about a Sinn Fein flag.

Accompanied by Father John we went on the track of the Rebellion. We climbed up the stairs of the Louth Dairy in North King Street, to see the bullet holes in the wall where what was called ‘The Affair in North King Street’ took place. We climbed to the high turret-like room of Monks’s Bakery, riddled through with bullet-holes, where an intrepid sniper had kept picking off the soldiers who were trying to mount a machine-gun on the roof of the Broadstone Station which should sweep North King Street and Church Street. Many things we saw and heard which are better unpublished, for the present, at all events.

From this dreary pilgrimage we went on to tea at a Unionist house full of wounded officers. The days were full of such contrasts. All manner of people came to see us in our hotel—now Lord MacDonnell, again a Nationalist M.P.: young soldiers from the Curragh: a Judge of the High Court; an editor who had been allowed his first bite by that sporting Provost Marshal, Lord Decies: writers and artists and playwrights. The Shelbourne was crowded with soldiers. One day Father John came in to tea in his habit and sandals, bare-headed, and was stared at curiously.

But everywhere there was the feeling of distrust, of suspicion. One day I was told that I myself had been arrested—a confusion with Dr. Kathleen Lynn, I suppose—and I really felt as though I had.

Many people would not talk of the Rebellion, and they gave one the creepiness more than the ones who talked. The big man whom I met at a crossing—one of the finest and bravest men in Dublin, who shook his head with a sick look when I asked him if he could tell me anything, for I knew from the newspapers that he had touched against the Sinn Feiners: ‘No, no,’ he said, ‘I can’t talk about it. They were green boys. We were

digging them up for weeks afterwards, out of gardens and dunghills, and all sorts of places.' He had got a grue.

The most cheerful thing at the Shelbourne during that visit was Barry O'Brien. We were delighted to find him there, going about briskly, silver-haired and rosy-faced, with an incessant twinkle of fun in his eyes. He would come in with his hat on—he was always afraid of a draught—and put it down on the piano or the nearest convenient point. We talked as though we knew that we should have no further chance of talking. He drove the Shelbourne nearly frantic, demanding roaring fires on a June day and shutting up the windows, always telling the waiters that 'this lady,' meaning me, wanted a fire or felt a draught. He loved to recall the day, long ago, when he and John O'Leary, the old Fenian Chief, came to see me at Ealing and found me working in the garden. We had to go in because Barry O'Brien felt the garden draughty. We had to shut out Pat, my St. Bernard, because Barry O'Brien was afraid of dogs. 'Good Lord of Heaven!' said O'Leary, 'I never knew a man afraid of as many things as you, O'Brien.' 'Ah,' said I, 'if you were afraid, you'd be afraid to say you were.'

One day we had a couple of Hussar boys from the Curragh, who, with our own soldier boy and some girls, were enjoying themselves. I fled from them to Barry O'Brien. 'Good God,' I said, 'what have I to do with those boys? They are too young for me!' He recognised the quotation from the beloved Lord Edward with delight.

Old Parnellites, we trusted and respected each other. He had a great admiration for my working powers. I used to come down early to a dismantled and undusted lounge to get my bit of writing done. I would look up to his 'Well, you are a wonderful woman!' Once I was reviewing Mr. John Parnell's *Memories* of his great brother for the *Observer*. 'I wish you'd lend me that when you're done with it,' he said, 'for John Redmond.

He asked me the other day if I had it.' I took up my pen and wrote in the book, 'John Redmond from Katharine Tynan,' and handed it to him. I had only seen Mr. Redmond once since my marriage, but we had been Parnellites together. The old fealty never slackened through the years.

'Don't talk to those English boys,' he said to Pamela one day. 'If you saw my chap in the Navy you'd never look at them again.'

Again he was offering Pam a large bribe if she would stand up and repeat 'Easter Week' aloud in the lounge full of soldiers and old general officers.

It all seems very little to tell, without the exuberant, boyish gaiety that accompanied it. The Good Comrade, the dear, old, joyous Boy—what a gap he has left!

## CHAPTER XXIV

JOHN HIGGINS

SOME time that June an article appeared in the *New Witness* describing some phases of the Dublin Rising. The name was new to me, but the description was so vivid as to excite my interest in John Higgins, whoever he might be. I wrote to him at the *New Witness* office, and a little later I had his reply. He was a young man in rather delicate health, living on a little western farm, not many miles from me as the crow flies, near Frenchpark in Co. Roscommon. He told me in one of his early letters that he was threatened with consumption and had had haemorrhages in the past—‘One of these days it will get me,’ he wrote—but the Dublin doctor whom he had gone up to consult, and so had happened to be in Dublin for Easter Week, had told him he was free from consumption. He had a gift for the Thing Seen. He ought to have been a war correspondent in the Great War instead of hungering and thirsting for Life on a four-acre farm in Roscommon in the terrible climate, starved for intellectual life and the society of those of his own interests and aspirations. It is never as bad in Irish rural life as it would be in a corresponding life elsewhere, for there are always a few to understand and sympathise. A priest or two, a doctor, clever and young, who took John Higgins’s case as though it were his own, who, indeed, had had a sanatorium cure himself, so knew how to sympathise : relatives who loved and admired him : such compensations he had.

I read that first letter of his to Mrs. T. P. O’Connor, and she it was who set me on to think of a cure for John Higgins. After some correspondence I asked him if he

would go to South Africa or to California if it was made possible for him. He was very reluctant : a sanatorium, then, since he was not prepared to go far away. This was A. E.'s suggestion. ' If he intends to live in Ireland, and which of us does not, let him be cured in Ireland.' That, also, he was unwilling to consider. Finally his heart's wish came to light. He wanted to go to London, to try his fortune as a journalist and writer. Life—in that sense—was what he was starving for. He was very sensible about it. There was plenty of clerical work to be had since so many had gone to the War. He could live in that way while he waited for his chance with Fleet Street and the publishers.

In the old house where I am writing I discovered the other day a record of weather and crops, and the arrival of flowers and leafage, kept with meticulous care for the year 1830. I quote it to show the conditions of weather in which John Higgins and many like him languish. At that time, apparently, wheat was grown on land which is now let for grazing by cattle and sheep. I have often wondered how they live on it. When you see a green spot it is moss—if moss had commercial value what money there would be in Connaught ! Thistles and nettles grow rankly : and some of the fields are useless because of the serried ranks of rushes. A peasant explained to me that mushrooms did not grow here because of the poverty of the land—mushrooms, which in their caprice grow on a bare chalk cliff and sand dunes more freely than on richer pastures ! But wheat—good lack !

The owner of Brookhill's record of the weather in the year following Catholic Emancipation reminds one of Allingham's rhyme :

January bitter very,  
February damp, sirs,  
March blew  
And April snew,  
May has got the cramp, sirs.

He begins :

The Winter of 1829-30—Very severe frost ; snow fell at six different periods, from the close of December 1829 to the close of February 1830. Very little rain fell, but the season was otherwise so severe as to kill most Bays, Arbutus, Laurestinus, and Aristotelia ; Italian Cypress and Cistus also suffered.

March was cold, windy, and rainy till the close, when there were a few days of brilliant sunshine.

April—The first fortnight of this month was so fine that it was the most favourable seed-time I recollect ; the ground being in a good state to receive the corn which, consequently, showed a braid in nine days. Showery weather came on, as is not infrequent, at the Flowering of the Black Thorn. The rivers became swollen with rain.

May—The first week of this month was Fair ; from the 8th to the 31st vast quantities of rain fell. A great flood on the 27th. The last week was particularly cold and wet, with high and blighting winds. No potatoes were sown in burned land from the constant rain up to the 31st of May.

June the First—The flowers of the White Thorn, Lilac, and Laburnum disappeared prematurely at this time by reason of the blighting winds and cold rains. The first week of this month was showery ; from the 7th to the 11th, a few fine days, when the weather became unnaturally cold as in March. Trees, except in sheltered places, having their foliage blighted and withered on the side exposed to the North-West. Genial or Summer warmth began on the 26th and lasted till the end of the month.

July—This month was perhaps the wettest in the memory of Man. The rivers became flooded. On the 7th there was sleet and some days throughout as cold as March. About the 25th there was an extraordinary transition to the extreme of heat so that the weather became quite oppressive for five days, three of which were of brilliant sunshine with an almost Syrian wind. The last two or three days of the month were again cold and wet.

August—This month was, with the exception of four or five days of sunshine towards the middle of the month, showery, wet, and windy. On Friday the 27th the rain was excessive as well as incessant, continuing throughout the night and accompanied with a cold wind that might be expected in February. Rivers and low ground inundated and the crops materially injured.

(Nevertheless the good gentleman ‘commenced reaping my own wheat on August 30th.’)

September—This month was one of constant wet and storm. The quantity of rain was even still greater than any of the preceding months, which, since May, were the wettest I remember. The storms before and about the Equinox were continuous and did much harm to the crops. The fall of the leaf began three weeks earlier than usual, and swallows began to congregate on the 16th. More than half the oat crop remained uncut at the close of the month.

October was fine and mild, but November was as bad as ever. On the 19th there was a storm unequalled since 1822. December was wet and cold with some snow.

Although Mr. Lambert talks as if the year were an exceptional year, it tallies very well with my experience of the Western climate, now a three-years-old one, with a few extra months added. The amazing thing is that every one in the West does not die of the weather and the immense discomfort it entails ; the slough into which the roads turn in winter, the worse slough of the little boreens by the cottage doors, through which the school children and every one else, coming and going, must walk, mired over the ankles. The second amazement is that any one ever wrings money out of such soil. The third is not that the people go away, but that they come back. And—wonderful !—the school-children are clean and prettily dressed, with bows of ribbon in their hair ; the girls make their show of feminine vanities like any other girls in happier climes. The men, perhaps because they have to work in the mire, make less headway against it. They walk even in dry weather as though they felt the weight of the mud.

What the rain must be and the mud, and the soaked sponge that takes the place of solid earth to delicate lungs, I can only dimly imagine. It was bad enough for Mr. Lambert in the spacious and kindly house I inhabit for a time—I don’t believe he ever saved those oats—but for dwellers in the little farmhouses and cottages that cling to the surface of the bog like a gold-

winged bird—it must be hardly endurable. Or so it seems to those who only look on it from outside; the people themselves seem happy enough.

Through the kindness of some friends arrangements were made for John Higgins to try his fortune in London: he was so keen about it. He came to see me in the autumn of 1916—a tall, fair young man, with a hectic flush in his cheeks. He was still quite sure that he had not consumption. He stayed the night, and the next morning we had a long talk by the fire in my little work-room. He went away very gaily. Our plans were progressing. ‘It will not be long now,’ he said, as he glanced back at me, going down the steps to the car which was to take him to the station. I never saw him again.

I held him back from going during that terrible winter of 1916-1917. I conjectured him looking for my letter, the one which should give him his freedom, but I did not write. When, about the 25th of February, an illusive softness and warmth came, and the solid walls of snow by all the hedgerows began to run, I wrote to him joyfully, bidding him God-speed, and telling him how to proceed when he got to London, where friends awaited him.

A few days later I had a letter to say that the doctor would not hear of his travelling *yet*. He was in bed, and there had been haemorrhage again. For a while we both pretended that the great adventure was only postponed. I believe *he* knew all the time, before the kindest of young doctors broke it to him, with a greater suffering in the telling than he had in the hearing. Whatever chance he had had of life had been nipped off short by the deadly cruelty of that winter. To read his letters over again is terribly pathetic. He had such hopes from time to time. Once he is in magnificent spirits, and so eager to be off, but must submit first to an examination by his doctor. The examination revealed that he had a temperature of 104, and so he was put to bed instead of flying off into the world he longed for.

The days of his decline were the days of the making of a saint. He did everything he was asked to do,

most patiently. He took part in all the prayers and religious exercises made for his recovery, without, I think, any real belief that he would live. One of the most touching things was his struggle against the relief given him by morphia, his reducing the drug by minute degrees till he could do without it altogether, lest he should grow to depend on it—as though he had time for that!

Friends kept him supplied with books and all kinds of reading through that spring and summer. He was a voracious reader and he enjoyed his reading, although after a time he was, as he said himself, ‘only able to lie down sitting up.’ He described himself as in a sultan’s bed of pillows and cushions while he wrote his long letters, about politics, about books, all manner of things. Of the books he most enjoyed was *How Jonas Found His Enemy* by Dr. Greville MacDonald, a spiritual romance to which he brought a spiritual eye and understanding: another was Shane Leslie’s delightfully vivacious *End of a Chapter*. Among the friends who provided him with reading in generous bundles was Mrs. Maude Egerton King. He wrote me long critical letters of the books he read. I think I must have sent them to people to read, for I remember a letter of Sarah Grand’s in which she praised his criticism, but I cannot lay my hand upon it nor upon other letters of political interest, so they are perhaps hidden away in envelopes inscribed to me in other people’s handwriting. The only sustained piece of criticism I can find is of my own *Middle Years*. I like this bit where he says of John O’Mahony :

‘ All those who love the lonely places and the long roads have an immense attraction for me. He reads as though Synge had created him.’

When the winter that had killed him at last relaxed her deadly grip, and spring came as never before, with the flowers of February, March, and April, all in the lap of May, and tumbling over each other lest they should miss an appearance, he longed to be out ‘ to see the greenery, to smell the scent of the earth.’ He had his wish. He

was taken into the garden for a little while on the 1st of June, and that was his last outing.

I had been telling Francis Ledwidge about John Higgins in my letters to him. A letter dated 31st May 1917 refers to this. ‘I am sad when I think on the boy from Roscommon. He will remember you when he comes into his Kingdom. Mention my name to him, saying how sorry I am not to have known him, and that I hope he has not any pain.’

John Higgins died on the 13th of July 1917, taking with him certain trusts of mine, which I know he keeps faithfully. I think of him with Francis Ledwidge and another young Irishman, Richard O’Neill, who fell in action in the autumn of 1916. Richard O’Neill answered an advertisement of mine for one of my books which was out of print. That was while we were still living in England. He had the book, and sent it to me joyfully refusing to take any payment for it. I believe he told me that he was a bank clerk in Norwich. He was very keen about literary matters, and he wrote that he and a friend used to tramp the country talking poetry and books. He ended a letter with this charming phrase: ‘If you ever want any one to do anything for you—to stand up to lions for you, to kill an enemy of yours, to go through fire and water for you, he or I will do it’—‘he’ being his friend.

I heard nothing of him for some years till he wrote to me in 1916, telling me he had got his commission. I think he was so proud of it that he had to write and tell me. Only a few letters had passed between us when a box of sweets I had sent him was returned marked ‘In Hospital.’ A little later I saw that he had died of wounds.

These three I like to think of as guarding from Heaven certain interests of mine. ‘Do not worry about your boys,’ John Higgins had written to me, ‘I look upon myself in a way as their trustee.’ He had the hardest path of the three to traverse in the long, slow dying. I know they all remember me now that they have come into their Kingdom.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE REBELLION AS SEEN BY JOHN HIGGINS

FOR a book about the Irish Rebellion of 1916, which I hope to write some day, I asked John Higgins to tell me his story. This is what he wrote :

‘ How do you begin writing about a rebellion ? Beside it war is a comparatively easy matter, an affair of progressions. Human interest is led in a fortifying way along a sort of emotional path graduated with incident, each event going one better than its predecessor. From the *casus belli* to the diplomatic queries, to the scare headings, to the Parliamentary announcements, to the lonely soldier with a bullet in his heart across the frontier, and so from the confusing tangle of ambiguities and strident journalese to the last step—the straight issue of war. It does not so much break out as stand aloof to be broken into at the end of a sequence. But rebellion is a different thing ; the essence of it is surprise. You ask for a match under the old regime and light your pipe under the Provisional Government : and, because the contagion of surprise spares no one, gentle or simple, it is impossible to reproduce happily the sudden and violent contrasts that burst above the level surface of our routine when a few hundred men in dark green swept into the General Post Office on Easter Monday of 1916, saluted an unfamiliar flag in one long, racking volley, and proclaimed our country a Sovereign State.

‘ It was all done under our eyes in the midday light, and, as it so happens (it is almost like ritual with us) that you cannot leave the city decently without first wasting a few minutes at Nelson’s Pillar, O’Connell Street had

half-choked itself with Bank Holiday folk, motors chasing northwards to the Fairyhouse Races, overladen trams flying eastwards and southwards to Howth, Sutton, and Tallaght, side-cars plying everywhere, and great crowds and processions of people peculiar in their enjoyment, loitering here and there, industriously doing nothing. For all these the *volte-face* might have been arranged to startle them out of their dull, thoughtless wits : but not one man or woman of us had, I think, an idea then that we were looking at anything more than an unconsidered prank. We could not see that every moment was a historic moment, every incident a link in an epic. For, believe me, you can take humanity by the throat, as it were, and leave it incredulous : and men and women are born into the world, grow up, marry, and die without ever getting a grip on the realities that meet them daily in the streets and newspapers as movements and propaganda. To our unreceptive intelligence the attempt to blow up the Pillar was—even as an artistic protest—something of a nuisance, spoiling the holiday. Everything was, from that naïve standpoint, wilful and wrong. Upon the spectators the noise and alarms produced a frantic disintegration, filling up the street, followed by a regrouping here and there to which individuals were drawn like atoms to their affinity. Windows were being riven with butt ends of rifles ; somebody was reading a manifesto in the sincere, dignified style of Pearse ; reinforcements kept pouring out of Abbey Street, where employers and customers alike had been bundled into the street and Volunteer guards stood on duty. From Cork Hill there kept coming a nervous rapping of rifles which, by and by, extended to other parts of the city near and remote. Across the open space near the Pillar one could catch the flash of bayonets inside the Post Office, and note the dive and bob of heads back and over as the intruders piled up material for palisades—all was movement and breathless excitement, but without confusion. It was like a stage setting for some stupendous notion of pageantry. With the

long, barking volley the curtain went up, as it were, on a turning-point in history. Above our startled heads waved a new flag—the old flag—with an officer standing proudly by, bareheaded. At that moment the dream that had been dreamt through countless generations of our island story took form and substance, and the men who had taken for their portion the sorrows of Caithlin-ni-Houlihan looked into the infant face of their ideal incarnate. We see it now in the retrospect with its solemnity, its terror and wonder, but for the moment it was lost on us. Whatever malignant god controls the unmanly promptings that lurk—despite every pretence—in the recesses of our humanity, was even then active. Perhaps it is to such uncertainties that all strange enterprises are born. Men fled from the anger of the stars when Cæsar died that Rome might live, and we, who looked upon the cradle of the Irish Republic, looked—at least in bewilderment.

‘ Everywhere the same scene reproduced itself. The crowd flying from O’Connell Street, ran full tilt into a similar crowd hurrying from Liberty Hall. Around the Castle it was impossible to know where to go or which force was in possession of the building. A narrow street off the river brought us to a lane-way opening on Dame Street. From an archway beside the Empire Theatre we tried to take our bearings while stray bullets ricochetting from the walls fell in the street outside. We could not, of course, see the Castle, but the City Hall was plainly in possession of the Volunteers, a circumstance which led us to believe that the more important building was theirs also. That subject was one of warm discussion for forty-eight hours afterwards ; the number of people who saw the successful storming of the Castle gates surpasses belief. Except for a few sentries inside the railings, Stephen’s Green was quieter on Monday evening than I ever remember seeing it. Occasionally a Volunteer or two would pass along the walks by the lake, but as for that liberally circulated activity of trench-digging, I could see nothing of it.

By the way, those trenches are something of a mystery. For the life of me I could never find them. I did come across some broken earth, but it struck me as being less a trench than a London clerk's imitation of a potato furrow.

'When a party of Lancers appeared at the Rotunda an old sea-captain, just arrived from the home of revolutions, South America, suggested crossing over to the Post Office side—the larboard side, he called it. Cavalry against a fortress had a touch of Quixote about it. Their officer, a good-looking, finicking sort of man, was fitting on his gloves as the party trotted along. Somewhere beyond the Hammam Hotel they were met by a volley that brought down some horses and sent the remainder clattering away in retreat. Of the casualties one was the dandyish officer, who passed, poor fellow, into the shades with the second glove unadjusted. Further up the street another man reeled in his saddle and fell. Above the corner, whence came the discharge, a little cloud of smoke curled casually upwards. For the present the fighting was done, but we, who were hoping against reason that something would emerge at last, —some counsel, some compromise—to settle everything, saw in that one incident the irrevocable step, the gauntlet backed by the deed—the first challenge of the infant State.

'All that evening crowds paraded the streets, watching Volunteer companies with fixed bayonets marching to their posts. The Government might have thrown up the sponge, so completely was it eclipsed; not a soldier, not a policeman in view. The more adventurous clustered round the Post Office, exchanging jokes and gossip with the defenders, scrunching plate glass under their feet, and making a respectable show of unconcern at the little colonies of rifles staring at them out of every window. Until nightfall, when the people began to melt from the streets, everything was quiet except for a forlorn rifle-shot in the distance, but the sense of expectancy was strong. There was a general impression that the military were being hurried hot-foot from the

Curragh for a midnight attack, and on the strength of that feeling I doubt if there was a single unshuttered window in all Dublin that night. By midnight the looters were providing a strong counter-attraction, burning whatever could not be stolen. At Earl Street and Abbey Street groups of Volunteers in shirt sleeves filled up barricades, the men sweating and coughing in the smoke of a burning shop that swept in low, dense masses along the ground. Now and again the red shirt and brass helmet of a fireman would emerge from the murkiness to take counsel with his fellows, when some fresh outbreak threw red tongues of fire, lascivious and insinuating, into the night. With an east wind blowing, the Liffey at full tide was distinctly a personality ; but for a genuine all-round smell commend me to burning leather. In the unusual darkness the city gave one an uneasy impression of death and abandonment, but where the Post Office showed stolid in a halo of errant smoke, with never a movement or sign of occupation, there was always a sense of waiting on the alert and watching the night. Upon that building the minds and tongues of the whole city ran during the anxious hours. The *fons et origo* of the passionate dream, its fate stood for the fate of the whole adventure. We sat and smoked for hours in the starriness with rifles chattering from Church Street and the Courts, trying to picture as we might the adopted home of so much surging faith and devotion. Night and the stars and our brothers in arms, what was and what might be, the chivalry, the madness, the inevitable end. There were moments, I think, when the whole mystery of our country's ideal stood faintly luminous but illegible by our side, when we seemed to look upon the sanctified heart that in every century beats for an instant, a world's romance of sacrifice and sadness—and dies.

‘ As far as the north side is concerned everything had been set in order for an effective resistance during the night. A motley but quite forbidding barricade barred the way at Cabra Bridge. When out of curiosity I

requested to be allowed to pass along, I was firmly but quite politely held up by a sentry, a youth in mufti, with no equipment save a single-barrel shotgun—a formidable weapon at close quarters, but otherwise useless—and a bag of the material that my grandmother used in her wholesome feather beds, crammed with cartridges. His impartiality was undoubted, for a very smart buggy, which almost deserved to get through for sheer display of *élan*, had to yield to the persuasions of the grim sentry and his shotgun. There was quite a display of suburban parlour furniture in that barricade, serviceable sofas and chairs, and in the middle our grocer's pony cart looking very plebeian and out of place. Seemingly there is a special Providence that overlooks the affairs of small grocers—a very over-taxed Providence I imagine—but it is noteworthy, in the context, that although the more luxurious elements were mere faggot wood by Tuesday evening, the familiar cart delivered a dozen of stout to some thirsty students next door on Thursday morning. At the Park Road Bridge, after an effort to spring a mine had proved futile, a barricade of barrels, boxes, and wire was erected. The sentry there, who might have been specially imported from Mexico for the occasion, with his swarthy face, picturesque muffler and hat, *comme il faut*, knew his business. There was no exit—orders! He was very sorry, but it was the Provisional Government now! Inconvenient—yes! But would I *please* step back—as if, with a bayonet at my chin, I had any intention of stepping *forward*. To every such defence groups of young men and women came strolling, their confidence—the sunshine was like a spray—inversely proportional to the omens. There was much laughing and small talk, many rumours of invasion and Volunteer dissensions, amateurist impressions of street fighting; in a word, all the irrelevant chatter that springs disconcertingly from our headless democracy brought in quick, familiar contact with unforeseen crises.

'All that morning O'Connell Street kept carnival as if in derision of the *coup d'état* and the imminent conse-

quences. At Moore Street corner the public-houses were being fast sold out. One met drunken men and women frequently. Drapery shops, jewellers, sweet and tobacco shops, spirit grocers in the vicinity of the Provisional Government's headquarters, had all been or were being looted. The swaying ant-hill of humanity, that came in its hundreds to look on the graver aspect, had its attention undermined by the wanton ruffianism of the gutters of Dublin minding number one. Men hawked watches shamelessly at so many a shilling ; urchins in tall hats played at being knockabout comedians, golfing swells, or soldiers, running to and fro among the crowd, pausing only to get astraddle of the two dead horses. Unclean women in shawls bore off freights of costly furs and finery ; one old hag literally dripped alarm clocks. Outside a fancy-store something similar to a football scrum open to the sexes was taking place. Heaven alone knows the motley loot that came hurtling and splintering through the windows to the crowd waiting ravenously below—picture-frames, ornamental knick-knacks, books, toilet outfits, royalty on postcards, Teddy Bears, hand-cameras. It rained fountain pens.

' So it was that for the moment the seriousness of the emergency was smothered in ridicule. But, occasionally, the curious throng would fly apart as little convoys of motor-cars came whooping warningly through the street to glide under the sagging strands of barbed wire held purposely aloft on bayoneted rifles. A clear space before the Post Office seemed reserved for the professional confidences of the leaders, all of whom looked refreshingly neat and well-equipped. Despatch-riders came and withdrew, commissariat carts, sometimes bearing unimpeachably loyal names, rumbled up, mysterious vans, strongly guarded, followed, the whole varied activity going to a note of unrelieved seriousness and strictest military observance. Yet, if you believe me, whether it was due to the flashing sunshine or the raucous foolery of the mob, there was something unreal about the *ensemble*, something almost indecent. If I fail to make this

picture convincing, it is because it was not convincing at the time. For a few seconds of the preceding night one seemed to have vision and understanding ; but, in the morning, as if God was withholding the interpreting talent that sees into the very heart of life, the whole scene swam before and around us like some colossal *mélange* of high purpose and buffoonery, austerity and profanity, mysticism and vagabondage, blend for blend, all thrown headlong by the Devil's own stage manager into the proudest street in Europe. I know a dozen men writing to-day with the faculty of making a revolution in fiction far more realistic than the one I myself experienced seemed to me.

' Of the actual fighting I can only write briefly. I saw very little of it. Somewhere about two in the afternoon shrapnel began to play on the drawing-room barricades, followed by a shower of bullets from some unascertainable quarter. The defenders, taking to the houses, gave battle from the windows and roofs. Puff, puff, puff ! soon there was an opaque grey cloud over Cabra Bridge. Outflanking the position from Glasnevin, the military effected a surprise entry by the gardens and backyards—first fall for the Dublin Fusiliers. With that rebuff the position on the Park Road became untenable, and such of the defenders as were not captured withdrew citywards, leaving the northern entry open. Through that gate huge covered motors, like Boer wagons on trek, tore down the North Circular and Berkeley roads at nightfall, filled with soldiers, their bayonets glinting in the gloom. Short as was the fight, it had tragedy to spare. The fatuous spectators, lingering too long and heedless of the rain, ran amok when the fusillade opened. Not all of them escaped. Knots of hysterical people helped, with linked arms, some limp victim to hospital, face and clothes running blood. A priest, materialising from nowhere, hastened with the *viaticum* from a dying girl to a man with his brains splashed over his trousers. Two boys with head-wounds, and dark clotted hair lay dead. An old man was shot—*blind*.

'On Wednesday morning we had two surprising items of news—that Sir Roger Casement had been sent to the Tower—homely climax to his strange adventure by land and sea, to be run down by a peasant's daughter in Kerry—and that Sheehy Skeffington had been shot in Portobello Barracks. Poor Skeffington, the alert, good-humoured-looking little man, with his air of perpetually savouring a joke and hurrying to a mass meeting with some brilliant amendment up his sleeve—we were very sorry for him.

'That evening I witnessed a delightful conflict between a Volunteer sniper and some soldiers. The former was either too humane for his work or too uncertain; the latter appeared too unnerved and amateurish. The exchanges took place across a green railed-in lawn, the combatants taking cover and behaving in the accepted fashion. War on these terms might become the most fascinating game possible, leaving the most pacific conscience without an objection. An almighty racket, plenty of movement, thrills galore, no casualties, and honour—I hope—satisfied. No one saw the sniper except the writer, and *on fours* the sniper could not have sniped the megatherium.

'About midnight a thin shaft of light showed white through the closed shutters of my room. Kneeling at the window I watched the quivering glare of a search-light passing the roofs and chimneys in review. There was a venomous volley in unison—yet not quite so—and when I knelt down, wondering which bullet had got home first, thinking of the murderous hide-and-seek of those strange lonely vigils on the housetops of our afflicted city, thinking, too, that out there those abrupt dramas were being played, Irishman against Irishman on the holy soil of our country—I could only pray simply—God save Ireland. But God sees the confusions and implications of our worship.

'The world knows how the following two days passed, position after position falling to the military, guns smashing desolation and horror by night and day into

the burning heart of Dublin, troops closing in nearer, nearer. And on Saturday, with infinite relief and some incredulity, came the tidings of surrender, of another dream laid, of the end of good, impractical men's hearts' desire, the end of that Irish Republic that struck, in full confidence of victory, fifteen hundred against the greatest empire the world has known, in fair fight, struck and failed, but kindled for the generous imaginations of mankind a touch of romance that darkened a whole continent of armies. It is over now with its stresses and piteousnesses, its hopes, its prides, and devotions—over for ever, except its enduring memory. Against every array of contumely I will still maintain that in its spirit and unselfishness this was something almost religious—in despite of which sedentary madmen in the coming days will write superficial devilment (as many of them are doing now) for the children of Ireland yet unborn and Ireland's woe. Time is a healer and novelty a philtre to close the eyelids of retrospect ; but can one ever enter the new building, to buy stamps across a brand-new counter from a brand-new clerk, thoroughly disinfected of all dangerous sentiments, without thinking of the old building at the close of the red week, when the fabric of dream-stuff was shot and riven and the last gallant rally was made to the bleeding heart of an enterprise—the spirit heart of the Irish Republic !'

## CHAPTER XXVI

### BROOKHILL

FOR the first time one left Dublin behind with a sense of relief. The most terrible of all spectres, Fear, haunted the old town in those summer days. We got back to a fearless country. The stations through which we passed were indeed crowded with R.I.C. men, but the country boys on the platform wore the Republican colours, with as much insouciance as the small Dublin urchins, who were yet so quick to salute an officer because soldiering is in their blood. The hired motor-car which took us from the station was driven by a youth wearing the yellow, white, and green. By the way, I have been told that the colours signify the union of orange and green with the colourless white for the link between. Dublin had been bitter and revengeful, or it had been gay and forlorn, according to its way of looking at the thing : it had been *macabre*. One had seen and heard so many ghastly things. For once the West gave one reassurance.

We were soon in the midst of another move. The Congested Districts Board had bowed us out of Carradoyne, having taken over the estate. About the time—I believe it was the very day the Board showed, through its solicitor, an intention to ‘turn nasty’—a married Lambert had written to me : ‘Do find us a tenant for Brookhill.’ Brookhill is the dearest spot on earth to the Lamberts. It seemed providential coming on the very heels of the solicitor’s letter, which had a gouty sound of irascibility. The writer might have had fierce twinges as he wrote. Brookhill was vacant, and an inspection of it showed that it was a very desirable

habitation : so after a few preliminary arrangements, we moved in, in such weather as Mr. Lambert described in his weather record ‘with an almost Syrian wind.’ We had some weeks of blazing weather without a drop of rain. The worst of fine weather in Mayo is that after a few weeks of it your water supply gives out, which is ridiculous, considering how much rain there is. Also the true Western begins to pine for the rain.

Brookhill is a house which has temperament and atmosphere, quite a lovable house. Being very dearly loved by its owners it has the air of being loved. It is gentle and comfortable and well-pleased.

We were told at our first coming that it was haunted. I have never seen nor felt any ghosts. It is a house of long, low-ceiled corridors, and quaint turns and twists. In the middle of the house, on the upper floor, there is a high central hall with a groined roof, capable, by closing doors on the intersecting corridors, of being made into a room. There is an oriel window built out over the hall-door, and above it a little lancet window with coloured lights. Above the window, but only visible from outside, are a couple of loopholes admitting to the space between the ceiling and the roof.

At Carradoyne we had had a pack of impudent starlings under the eaves that mimicked every sound they heard. Their bicycle bell had points before you heard them miaowing like the cats or barking like the dogs or cackling like the hens or whirring away like the lawn-mower. Many a time those rascals deceived me. But Brookhill had a roof-full of bees. The space behind these loopholes by which they came and went, was reported to be filled in with solid comb. In very hot weather the honey used to run down the walls. I never knew bees so irascible. Any noise, such as a motor, or even a lawn-mower, would bring them out in a vengeful crowd. Sometimes there was evidence of a battle of the bees in doorsteps strewn with the dying and the dead. We had to veil our front bedroom windows with mosquito netting lest the bees should attack our innocent guests

in sleep, but, after the bitter early months of 1917, they troubled us no more. The little oriel window used to be full of dead bees, and, once on a time, the floor was strewn with numbers of dead butterflies. We never knew from whence either came. We have made the little window into a shrine of Our Lady, with a lamp at her feet that sends out a ray of light visible a long way off. She keeps watch over the absent boys and remembers, perhaps, the boys of the house who have fallen in the war. So the window has been kept closed, and yet the bees and the butterflies came in.

Standing at the stair-head the corridor, narrow and low, stretches out so long that we call the rooms at the far end Darkest Africa, in allusion to their remoteness, not their darkness. Unexpected corridors ending in little rooms branch off at right angles to the main corridor. It is a house for children's games, for hide-and-seek, with its many rooms, its communicating doorways and double stairs, its easy egress by lower windows.

If you stand out on the tennis lawn and call to any one your words come back to you from the house, as fairly fine and deliberate as the mockery of the starlings. You might believe that the little ghosts of the vanished children were mimicking delicately.

It must have been an enchanting place for the children. In front of the house lies a little lake which is said to afford the best wild-duck shooting in Connaught. Wild birds of all kinds frequent the lake and its backwaters. There is always the rattle of the moorhens, and in the grey of the morning if you lie awake you hear the rush and the quacking of the wild duck as they come in. Sixty brace of duck will fall to a few guns of a morning, with tern and moor-fowl and other small game thrown in.

The backwaters are enchanting. In early summer you walk between walls of rhododendron overhanging the water. You go along a little spit of land till you come to an intersecting waterway, which you cross by a crazy plank or jump if you are agile. When the duck and the

moorhens have hatched out their broods you come on the little adorable creatures swimming about in quiet pools ; and you may wander along all sorts of pretty ways till you emerge on the wide bog full of pale reeds and rushes and steeped in a great quietness.

I have always held that generations of Brookhill children, with the unending industry of children when they love what they are doing, must have planted the primroses in such immense and unprecedented profusion. There are many daffodils in their season, both single and double, standing up against the background of velvety moss. But the primroses ! There is a big mound, Druidic perhaps, in which is a vault wherein an old Lambert chose to be buried. He could hardly have chosen a sweeter spot, but one rather grudges that grim reminder of our mortality its place amid all the sweet-nesses. Above the vault the feathery trees wave, and close by, the lake, gathered between banks, tumbles over a little weir, like masses of green hair, before travelling across a field or two to join the River Robe.

In spring you will hardly see a blade of grass on the Mount for primroses. It is a sea of primroses. The Mount is a sight then. There are sheets of primroses elsewhere, everywhere, like flights of white butterflies resting, wings spread, on the moss, while their moment lasts. But the Mount has so many primroses that they overflow and run out like little tongues into the level grass—even crossing the carriage drive as though a tide subsiding had left its foam behind.

The old Lambert who is buried in the Mount gives Brookhill its ghostly reputation to a people who delight in ghosts. Horses sometimes shy at the tumbling of the waters over the weir. Therefore it is said that the horses see old Lambert's ghost and will not pass it. There is supposed to be a ghost in the long avenue. I don't believe it. I should know old Lambert's ghost if I saw it, for his picture hangs in the panelled dining-room. The people who say that the Mount is haunted take such pleasure in the ghost that the vault had to be

closed against courting couples. There is such a thing as a delightful fear.

When Susan Mitchell stayed with us soon after our getting in—we were all jumpy just then—she said that an evil emanation came in at her window from the wood. Lily Yeats told me last summer that she had heard fairy music in the same wood. I, having moved into that room since, hear nothing but the wood pigeons, and see nothing but the dawn and the moonlight in the windows. When the wind is north east it does indeed emulate in my little work-room the south-east wind that played on the ventilator at Carradoyne. I know it is the wind, but if any one was out for seeing or hearing ghosts they could not pass that by.

To be sure the house has odd acoustic properties. When we came first the servants, sleeping downstairs, were scared by footsteps overhead and voices. Others heard them as well. There is a loose-fitting door which is shaken at intervals as though some one asked admittance. It was some time before these fears were laid at rest. I found out about them last autumn when the children were all gone away, and we were again as we had been before they came—with a difference. One did not like to pass the doors of their rooms that stood open showing a cold neatness instead of the happy disorder. The emptiness of the big wandering house could be felt.

At this time I changed my room from Darkest Africa, where I had been well content while the children stayed. It was less lonely at the head of the staircase, and the new room has a warm aspect and a cheerful chintz paper and hangings. But when I went up there in the afternoons and the dusk was closing in, I used to leave the door open for company. I would speak to some one coming up the stairs or passing the door, and would receive no answer. After a time I discovered that sounds on the lower floor seemed as though on the upper. Once I was standing in the narrow corridor off the hall downstairs when I heard a light, quick foot cross the hall, not ten paces from me. I went to see who it was :

there was no one. I came to the conclusion that it was the maid going to plenish the little lamp in the window upstairs, so that the boy on the Macedonian Front should have light through the hours of darkness.

If the house has any ghosts they are very gentle. I have never met with any though I have gone up and down those corridors in the winter dusk, and have come downstairs after every one is abed for something left behind. I still do not altogether like the open dressing-room door if I am in my room in the dusk ; but that is only a whimsy.

I should not like to meet the ghost of the Lambert who is buried in the Mount, nor the ghost of the Glendinning who formed the Brookhill library, whose portrait, ‘like that of a male witch,’ says a present-day Lambert, hangs over a door in the dining-room. This was the Glendinning who was the first Scotsman to be appointed to a Chair at Cambridge. When Boswell brought the news to Dr. Johnson the latter said severely : ‘Boswell, it is all very well to be facetious : you should *not* be indecent.’ Perhaps he had seen the learned Glendinning.

The little library he formed crowds the brown bookshelves of one of the very old rooms at Brookhill, those rooms of the oriels and the deep windows which must have been the nucleus of the house. It is an extremely pleasant room, with red walls and hangings that make a good background for the books. I have so many books of my own that I have only just begun to discover the library books, about which I have such a sense of responsibility that I do my reading standing or sitting opposite the vacant place in the bookshelf, restoring the volume to its place before I leave the room. It is a good small library, very much eighteenth century and earlier—the novelists, Fielding, Smollett, Sterne : many memoirists, histories : volumes of poems : curiously illustrated books. Perhaps I might have dipped earlier if some one had not said, quite wrongly, that it was a poor collection. He was not fitted to judge, but I thought

he spoke for those who were. Miss Edgeworth is quite modern in that library. I find some of my excursions into the books very delightful, even apart from the books themselves. One day I took down a very unpromising book, *M'Neill on the Second Advent*. In it I found the following inscription :

'To Superintendent or Inspector of C Division for the use of the men under him (as also for the Prisoners who may from time to time be confined in the Sackville Lane Station House) this book is given for Mr. Durham's civility and kindness to Mr. Hassard while he was confined there for one hour for telling a Mr. Edward Magowan an attorney of Co. Cavan, No. 6 Berkley Street, Dublin, that he was a Robber, Liar, and Thief, a Swindler and Forger—which is the Truth.'

(Signed) R. M. HASSARD.

87 Lr. DORSET STREET, DUBLIN.'

A further inscription on a second fly-leaf runs :

'If this book is read with attention, anxiety, and a desire for Knowledge, it may turn out for those who wish for to know the Truth the greatest blessing that ever fell on them.'

RICHARD, MAJOR HASSARD.

'14th July 1850.'

There is no indication that the book was ever read.

The library window, which opens as a door, leads out on to a flight of steps overlooking the tennis-lawn, under the oriel of the room above which corresponds to the oriel over the front door. There we sat during the very hot weather of the month after our getting in, evening after evening, with chairs at the head of the steps and cushions on the steps. Susan Mitchell was our first visitor in the new house. It was the week Sir Roger Casement was hanged at Pentonville, when a London crowd cheered in the street, while, at the back of the jail, a group of his countrymen and women knelt in the dust of the road and prayed for the passing soul. All that summer was darkened by death.

Susan used to sing for us in the inspired way she has, without music, swaying about to the passion or pity of

her song, her beautiful head misty in the twilight. It is a golden voice. A. E. said : ‘ Susan’s voice is like cream.’ She is as passionate as a nightingale, and she makes the platform singer cold and formal when one remembers her.

She sang many songs, but the one that remains, that will always bring the month and the year, was ‘ The Croppy Boy,’ the old song of the other Rebellion—1798. ‘ There was death in it,’ one of us said. It was always wailing about the house. No wonder one became jumpy.

After Carradoyne, Brookhill, where one could hear the shunting of the trains and their whistling, was quite urbane : and the friendly old people who were dependents of the Lamberts and yet remembered them with devotion were quite delighted to see us take possession of the house. I put up pictures and books and china, as though we had come to stay permanently. Those are things I delegate to no one, and I am told that while I am doing them I am unapproachable. When they are done, and I can look round at the work of my hands with pardonable pride, I usually retire to bed for a few days. We have had five major movings in ten years, and that was the worst, since we had no vans and but one packer, so had to do it all ourselves.

By the way, one of the old dependents of the Lamberts used to say : ‘ Many’s the time Miss Violet Martin came to Brookhill,’ and would display a photograph ‘ Martin Ross’ had given her. In my little workroom at Brookhill there is a picture of Martin Ross—such a sad one, made during her last illness by the most loving of hands.

People always tell me they like my workroom, in whatever house it may be. That at Brookhill is entered by two steps upward. It is a long, narrow room, and it has four little windows in the immensely deep walls, two looking north, one east, one south. Lily Yeats said to me last summer : ‘ When we were children in Sligo, we had a nursery very like this room, with windows either side. One side had a beautiful prospect of woods

and fields. The other side overlooked a stable-yard where there was always plenty going on. The future poet, and the future artist, and we, designers and embroiderers, used to hang entranced over the view of the stable-yard. We never looked at the beautiful prospect at all.'

My windows command the Mount, the beautifully wooded slope upwards from the lake, and a distant prospect of a range of greenhouses. The paper of the room did not commend itself to me, so I covered it as thickly as possible with pictures. There are A. E.'s *young* pictures, before ever he was A. E. There is a boy's head in chalk by W. B. Yeats, a relic of his art-student days. There is my father's portrait by J. B. Yeats, and a delightful little portrait of our Dublin Fusilier boy, at the age of six, by Dudley Hardy. There are some drawings in chalk and pencil by Dudley Hardy—a couple of illustrations to a story of mine by Edmund Sullivan, and all manner of small things, photographs, coloured prints, many Wyndhamiana ; many pictures of Lord and Lady Aberdeen, a large photograph of Lord Grey, and various other things dear to me. On the chimneypiece stands an old Crucifix which belonged to Lionel Johnson. The one wall which is without windows is entirely covered with books. For the rest, there is a long table, a real work-table ; and everywhere there is a confusion of papers and letter-baskets which is really quite orderly. When there is a good turf and wood fire in it it is charming. But one of these days I shall be pulling up my tent pegs and going. What do two greying people want with such a house, and their children scattered and gone from them ?

## CHAPTER XXVII

### PLAYBOYS OF THE WESTERN WORLD

THERE was a delicious day when Susan was with us that we motored to Louisburgh by the Atlantic. It was a sleepily warm day when one was peacefully drowsy, even motoring, and inclined to sing a little as children sing themselves asleep—a day on which one quite forgot to be jumpy, or to remember the Rebellion, except as an old, far-off, unhappy thing.

It was a grey morning. There are two mountains that dominate the plains of Mayo with many smaller ranges, Croagh Patrick and Nephin. In any kind of clear weather they are visible. Occasionally they are a field or two away, to all seeming ; they are actually some forty miles ; when they come to you like that you may expect polthogues of rain, or teems of rain as we used to say in my youth.

The morning was misty. As a rule you get a very good view of Croagh Patrick with Nephin away on the right as you approach Castlebar, which is about seventeen miles from us, but we got to Castlebar and on towards Westport, and tumbled down into Westport by the infamous hill by which the townspeople must travel every day, and climbed up out of it again, and not a glimpse of the Reek, as the country people call Croagh Patrick—but before us a hazy sky with no suggestion at all of a mountain.

From Westport to Louisburgh you run between the Reek and Clew Bay, and there is about as much of beauty when you can see it as any creature this side of Heaven has any right to expect. But that morning

there was neither Reek nor Bay. We explained, half-shamefacedly, as though we did not expect to be believed, that the wall of mist one side of us contained the Reek and the wall of mist the other side the Bay with its 365 islands. Susan did not say anything, but I am sure she had her doubts. Anyhow there was plenty to interest her, for there was a horse-fair in Louisburgh, and long before the town was reached the motor had to run through strings of horses, very often young ones, and led as often as not by a wild-headed little boy, or a small girl in a cotton frock. As one gets further West the dress of the women changes, very much for the better. The country is all the more beautiful for the pink and blue cotton, or the red Galway flannel of the women's skirts, and the white snood on the luxuriant hair that takes the place of the cheap fashions of the more sophisticated parts of the country.

The young horses, I may say, were everywhere, except on the road. They were on the stone walls that go down before a kick, or on the grassy banks, or in the next field, or across the bonnet of the motor, always with an intrepid child clinging to their heads; but though it seemed impossible not to have an accident, yet nothing untoward happened.

We had given up the Reek for that day, and Clew Bay for anything but a dull leaden mirror, when, suddenly, very high up, a winding pathway came into view; nothing but that, suspended in mid-air. Then the mist at our right hand became pearl and gold and opal, and out of it began to come the islands. Presently the very top of the Reek showed, massed in the clouds, and the mists rolled away and there came the golden splendour with the great purple wall of the Reek rising above us, on the other side the golden water, slightly heaving, with all its islets.

At Louisburgh the mist had come again, but it was golden summer mist which we might not have recognised for mist at all if it was not that, sitting under the apple-trees in the rectory garden, within sight and sound of the bees making their honey, the kind rector who had given

us lunch, lamented that the day was not doing its best for us, since the sea was hidden.

As we came home that evening, having stopped at Westport for tea, the motor broke down four Irish miles from anywhere. It was an exquisite evening with a young moon in a faintly rosy sky, and the air full of the whirring of reapers, for the people were everywhere saving their crops. We had time to be glad that we had made such a very good tea, for, though we sent out S.O.S. calls by every cyclist and motorist who passed, we were full three hours on the road. We had time to consider what would happen if all the calls were answered at once, and to congratulate ourselves that the broken axle had not happened going down that wicked hill at Westport—the chauffeur had remarked that he had felt her going all day—before help came. Then it took the shape of a car the proprietor of which had already been fined by the R. M. for a motoring offence. He happened to be driving—the same car that had taken fourteen to Galway Races, sitting up, lying down, on top of each other; and he had a pretty full complement; there were a couple supporting the spare wheel—but he called back to us cheerfully that he would return for us as soon as he had got rid of his party. We wondered if it was mockery or magnanimity. It proved to be the latter, for he came back, and off we went just at the moment the first rescuing car arrived. They all arrived in time and converged on to the lonely chauffeur sitting looking at the wreck of the car. We left him to settle with them.

But our driver took full advantage of the situation. Never have I been driven at such a pace, except once in the early days of motoring, while it was still an experience, and Sir Horace Plunkett drove me from the Department Offices in Merrion Street to the house where I was staying in the County Dublin. Those were the days when Sir Horace, with other highly placed gentlemen, was fined for exceeding the speed limit in England. He had to return for a meeting of the Council with very little time to do it in, and, on that drive, I quite shared the

delusion of the gentleman unused to fast motoring who said : ‘ What a long churchyard you have here ! ’ when it was only the milestones. I landed Sir Horace disgracefully in a *cul de sac*, after I had assured him that I could have found my way blindfold, having lost all sense of locality. Now and then I had a bewildering apparition—like Croagh Patrick appearing in the mist—of a Dublin Metropolitan policeman giving the salute.

But all that was long, long ago, and motoring is no longer the one thing to be desired, or one of the things most to be desired.

As for that rush home in the August evening of 1916, now and again I heard the R.M. say : ‘ Go quietly, P——.’ ‘ It ’s all right, sir,’ P—— would answer, with an oily chuckle. The car rocked from side to side. We narrowly missed several sheep. We knocked feathers out of a gander who was demonstrating to his wives that it was quite safe to cross the road in front of a motor so long as you didn’t get flurried. His high-pitched denunciation of us as road-hogs followed us. Not one of the fast mongrels for whom the most humane of motorists carry a lapful of stones, since it is the only argument against suicide that they understand, had a chance to get up with us or intercept us. The R.M. was silent. He had answered our despairing cry for moderation by a laconic : ‘ He has no lights ’ : and the oily chuckle followed from the driver.

One had time to remember. The R.M. had given instructions that the police were to look out for vehicles without lights and motors exceeding the speed-limit ; and an over-zealous (in any circumstances) District Inspector had promised to send out police patrols to catch offenders. One could conjecture the despairing resignation from the R.M.’s squarely set shoulders. It was between Scylla and Charybdis, and Mr. P—— had his full revenge.

At the very last lap, going into the town, we flashed before the scandalised eyes of the D.I. and one of his patrols ; and were gone before he could cry halt. As

we pulled up at our own hall door P—— remarked with the chuckle, ‘ That was a near thing ! If the tail light had been on they ’d have seen the number ! ’

‘ Look here, P——,’ said the justly indignant R.M., ‘ if you are ever brought up before me for not having lights or for exceeding the speed-limit, I ’ll give you the heaviest fine within my power.’

‘ I told you,’ said P——, ‘ when I nearly took the fleece off that sheep that I ’d never hit anything nor had an accident yet.’

Another of those days we went to Achill Sound where the R.M. occasionally sits, and that is even a more beautiful run than to Louisburgh by the Reek ; because for all the thirty miles or more you are approaching the mountains—Nephin and Nephin Beg and the Curraun Range—and they are opening out before you in their wild, soft majesty, with the little streams running down their sides and they in purple like a king of a summer’s day. When you have passed through the gap of that first range you may come upon a sea literally as blue as sapphire.

At Achill Sound, now bridged across, I always remember a story A. E. told me long ago of the bridging of the Sound—or was it Achill ? Mr. Balfour, the then Chief Secretary, and Lord Cadogan, the Lord-Lieutenant, were visiting those parts and were hospitably entertained by the parish priest. They had a very good dinner, and afterwards they listened sympathetically to the prayer of the parish priest that a bridge should be built over the Sound. Not so long before a boat-load of boys and girls had been swamped by a wave there, and every creature, some thirty in all, had been drowned, thus fulfilling a prophecy that a train should run between Westport and Achill and the first passengers it would carry would be a trainful of dead. ‘ We must see what we can do, Arthur,’ said the Lord-Lieutenant : and Mr. Balfour replied ‘ Yes, indeed, it seems a case for something to be done.’

The next morning the distinguished visitors awoke to

the strains of a band. Rising up and looking from their windows they beheld a crowd of people outside the house. The band played all through their dressing and while they breakfasted, and they had only to glance out to see that the eyes of the crowd were all looking one way.

‘ Yet they say the Irish are unfriendly,’ said one to the other as they met on the stairs.

‘ This is certainly a popular reception,’ said the other.

Their host enlightened them.

‘ It is that the people are expressing their gratitude for what you ’ve done for them.’

‘ For what we ’ve done for them ? ’

‘ The little bit of a bridge ye promised me last night. It ’s gone all over the island and they don’t know what to do, they ’re so delighted.’

‘ We couldn’t very well go back on it,’ said one statesman to another when they were alone.

I believe A. E. told me another story on that same occasion, for the two stories go together in my mind. It could not concern Achill, of which the Irish Church Missions made their own with such thoroughness that neither a Catholic church nor a Catholic school was permitted on the island.

It concerned one of those friendships between priest and parson which have happened sometimes in places where each had to depend on the other for society. One night there was a violent storm and the rector could not get home, so was grateful for the offer of half the parish priest’s bed. Before retiring each knelt down to say his prayers at their respective sides of the bed. They had sat up late talking and both were very sleepy. The parish priest said his prayers, yawned, and looked across at his guest, whose face was still hidden in his folded arms. ‘ I can’t be beaten by a Protestant,’ said he, and started off praying again. Again he looked across and marvelled at the piety of the rector, still absorbed in prayer.

This happened several times. At long last the Rector lifted his head and looked about him. ‘I believe I dropped asleep,’ said he.

‘Musha, the mischief bother ye !’ said the priest. ‘Here I am out o’ my bed at two o’clock in the morning, and all for you to have your beauty sleep !’

In the country around Achill you see the beautiful girls digging in the fields ; the men go off to Scotland for the harvesting and bring back enough money to live on when winter prevents their harvest of the sea and the land. Those girls add to the beauty of the landscape. Sometimes you see a red-haired girl and the pink and white of her complexion will be like apple-blossom : but often they are brown-haired and blue-eyed, with a splendid free carriage and beautiful figures.

Looking over the waste spaces one recalled George Maguire’s story of the Woman of the War.

‘Long ago, some time in the eighteenth century, there was an old fellow named Carabine, and he had the gift of prophecy. When he was dying he made two prophecies : one was that from his family should spring a great archbishop, and that came true. But we’re not concerned about the archbishop. The second prophecy was that in so many generations from himself—seven it was, I think—there should come a woman named Catherine Rowlands and she should live to see the greatest war the world ever knew, and she should be killed in the war, and her death would be the end of the war.

‘She will marry a man named Callaghan,’ he said ; ‘and she will have two sons and two daughters. She will be working her little farm, and she wearing a bracket (*i.e.* a check or plaid) dress when she will look up and see the lights over Achill and the men coming. Then she will run to warn the neighbours, and the men will overtake her at the Rock of the Horse, and they will kill her, and that will be the end of the greatest war the world has ever known.’

The prophecy was forgotten, except by a few inter-

ested in such queer matters, till about forty years ago, when a doctor in Ballycroy was wanting a servant. A fine, fresh-looking, young country girl came to him looking for the place.

'What is your name?' he asked.

'Catherine Rowlands.'

'And where do you come from?'

'From the Dale Mountains in Tyrawley.'

'Then you'll be Carabine's little girl,' he said—for that too was in the prophecy, and he knew all those old stories by heart.

She only laughed when he told her the tale; and it did not keep her from marrying a man named Callaghan who was in the same employment: and in time she had two sons and two daughters as the prophecy said. She had always a great liking for a 'bracket' dress, and she was not put off that either by the prophecy. But, when the great war broke out, and the people began to call her the Woman of the War, she grew frightened. One day she burnt her bracket dress, and without telling any one she went off to her own people in the Dale Mountains in Tyrawley. But after a time she wearied of being separated from her husband and children, and she went back to them, for she said: 'What will be will be!' and she bought herself a new dress of the bracket she always liked.

George Maguire went to see her with a couple of priests, and they had a toilsome journey, jumping over bog-pools, and half-wading in the soft places, and going through rushes and round boulders; but at last they found the woman herself in her little hillside farm, and she digging potatoes, and one of the daughters with her. She was still a fine fresh-looking woman of her age, and, when she was asked for the story she told it, her foot on the spade and her eyes looking out seaward the way the lights and the men were to come.

'And there,' she said, pointing to a great boulder, 'is the Rock of the Horse, 'Tis the only way I could take if I was runnin' to warn the neighbours; for there

is the mountain, and there is the sea ; and the only way for me would be by the Rock of the Horse.'

'But how do you know it is this war ?' asked one of the priests. ' You might live to see another.'

' It is this war,' she replied, ' for the prophecy said 'twas running I 'd be when they 'd overtake and kill me. I 'm sixty now, and if I was to live to see another war I wouldn't be able to run.'

In one of those little farm cottages, in the country lying back to the mountains, the famous criminal, Lynchehawn, was discovered. He had given the police a long chase, eluding them every time they got close up to him. The man whose father arrested Lynchehawn told me the story.

' My father was walking on the bridge of Westport one evening when a man passing close to him whispered in his ear. My father never made a sign but passed on and came back again, almost touching the man who had given him the whisper. It was the dusk of the evening, and as he passed, his hand hanging careless-like, a bit of paper was put into it. He walked back to the barracks and he got a light and he opened the paper. There was a message in it, and it was made out of letters cut from a newspaper, one by one, and it was to tell where Lynchehawn was to be found. So my father and two of the men went out that night ; and an awful business it was getting over the boggy country ; they were sometimes up to their waists in water, for it was pitch dark, and they kept falling into bog-holes and being pulled out again so that they were a wet and weary party when they arrived at last at the cabin where they were told they would find Lynchehawn. They knocked a long time at the door before they waked up the people ; and when they succeeded there was only an old man and woman, a trembling old couple, who protested there was nothing in the place but themselves, and that they 'd run out of it into a bog-hole if a terrible fellow like Lynchehawn was to come next or nigh them. It looked like as if their story was true, for not a trace there was of any one but

themselves, and my father began to think Lynchehawn had slipped them again or that maybe the message was a trap. He was just going when he turned back and looked at a big dresser against the wall, with a lot of delf on it. And, whatever came over him, he said : 'We'll have that dresser out.' So, despite the cries and prayers of the old woman, they dragged the dresser out from the wall, and behind it, in a hollow that the stones had been picked out of, was Lynchehawn !'

Lynchehawn, it may be remembered, escaped from prison and got safely away to America. His career, and his concealment by the people, whether out of fear or love, made the genesis of Synge's 'Playboy.'

Here is another playboy. I take this cutting from a local paper. It is a letter received by the Rural Council and read at a meeting of that body :

'MR. CHAIRMAN AND GINTLEMIN,—As wan that goes round with the stone-braiker given A helpin hand an lookin on at how yer min is workin, I feel it my Juty as no other wan would spaik for them that they are intitled to a rise of pay. They are up at five in the mornin' gettin' up Steem an' they are not Don until 9 at night. They are all Grace and oil : they cannot clane thimselfs like other min. I seen chimbley sweepers and when they would wash the sut of themselves they wud be 'all rite, but these poor min can't get the grace of there hands or face or close, the sute they may pay 2 or 3 pounds for it is not worth 4 pince in wan monnths. They are hallin and pullin at wire ropes until there hands is blistered. Patrick is like a hen on a hot greddle and when he gets on to the Good road, John takes his red flag and walks the road afore him. I want yous to give a rise of pay to the ingineers and helpers and the Breckers and rolers, let the ingins be little or big 2 pounds to the ingineers and 30 bob to the Helpers. They are worth every pinny of it and more. I hope, Gintlemin, yous 'll see your way to give that little Rise and your ingins will work better.'

A RAITPAYER.'

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### FRIENDS

As soon as we had finished settling in at Brookhill, Pamela and I went off for a brief visit to Evelyn, Lady de Vesci, at Abbey Leix, Queen's Co. The immediate cause of the visit was that Lady Wemyss, Mr. George Wyndham's eldest sister and Lady de Vesci's sister-in-law, was staying there with her daughters. I had had a great deal of correspondence with Lady Wemyss since her youngest son had fallen at Loos, and now his brother, Lord Elcho, had followed him, having been killed at Katia in the Sinai Desert, on Easter Sunday. In my case the correspondence resulted in an article in the *Cornhill Magazine* on those two noble brothers, who will, I hope, have a fuller and more fitting commemoration than could be given within the narrow limits of a magazine article.

Lord Elcho had belonged to the brilliant group of young men which included Julian and Billy Grenfell, John Manners, Charles Lister, Raymond Asquith, Patrick Shaw Stewart, with others such as Lord Lucas and Maurice Baring, equally brilliant and individual, if not quite on the same level of age. All, except Maurice Baring, have fallen in battle, and not at any time, I believe, nor in any country, has there been a group of young men of finer capacity than theirs. To each in his turn one might have said,

Be content!  
No honour of age had been more excellent.

From what I was told with a view to my article, I carried away an impression, in the case of the younger

brother, of one almost too heavily weighted with thought for his youth. He was but nineteen when he fell. His young face in the picture I have of him seems to me to have a look of suffering—of predestination, yet I know that he could be wildly merry at times. With Lord Elcho fell the fifth of Lord Edward Fitzgerald's great-great-grandsons to fall in the war. They were all beautiful, gracious, and gifted, some to an extraordinary degree. The letters of Lord Elcho and Ivo Charteris, the poems and letters of Edward Wyndham Tennant, show that they inherited the literary quality which is in Lord Edward Fitzgerald's beautiful letters and the romance of his personality. They wrote as to the manner born. I do not know if the younger generation shared the passion for Ireland which Madeline Wyndham had handed on to her children, beyond Percy Wyndham's letters to myself which I quoted in *The Middle Years*, in which it is plain that he inherited.

'Ireland means more to me than I could ever write or tell you if we met.'

And of his father : 'He was full of Irish blood and he loved Ireland like a real lover. It was no ordinary affection, it was right deep down in him. He loved her with a passion.'

I remember a Christmas when Lady Glenconner wrote to me that her children were performing a play she had written for them, *The Patriot*. Was the beautiful dark-haired Edward Wyndham Tennant Lord Edward in the play, I wonder ?

The letters I have seen of Ivo Charteris have no Irish allusion. They were mainly concerned with the War ; feverish at first with anxiety to be gone ; later, for the few weeks he had to live, filled with a quiet contentment, as of one who has attained his desire, and describing the things he saw with a real dramatic sense and beauty of wording. He was but emerging from his schoolboy days : his brow was heavy with promise of what was to come. Of Lord Elcho I have an impression as of one peculiarly fitted to lead, yet standing aside with an

austere reticence. He would seem to have learnt the ascetic virtues of detachment, of selflessness, of self-abnegation. Patrick Shaw Stewart, almost or quite the last of that band of friends, wrote to Lady Elcho after her husband's death : ' I do not think he ever, in all his life, wanted anything for himself, except you.' All his friends dwelt upon that selfless quality in him. If there was any danger that he would not use his great gifts to the best advantage it lay in that self-abnegation. His mother has said that he was capable of fierceness when his anger and indignation were aroused. He might take the kingdom of Heaven, but it was possible that he would not lay violent hands upon the kingdom of this world to bear it away, lest there should be self-seeking in it.

The letter he wrote to his mother when his brother fell is one of the great letters of the War, which seems to have given an impulse to literary expression in the form of letter-writing. I suppose when people are thinking of great things, and writing with stark simplicity, the naked soul speaking, the expression is like to be great. Over and over again in the letters of quite simple people, plain soldiers telling what they had seen, bereaved persons only conscious of bereavement, I have come upon great phrases and passages.

Here is the letter :

ALEXANDRIA,  
EGYPT, October 25th, 1915.

DARLING MUM,—I have absolutely nothing to say. When your own mother and brother are concerned it is futile to talk about sympathy, and one consolation for me is that, if any comfort is to be extracted, or if the best kind of thought is of any use—which, of course, it is—your soul is big enough, large enough for that purpose. The mere thought of your tackling it strengthens me. That sounds selfish and detached, but I have faith in you. I suppose the misery of people like Ettie breaks the shock. A woman with sympathy loses many sons before her own. If anything could dwarf one's own tragedy it is the agony of millions of others. But it doesn't—it is the other way about—one's sluggish imagination is stimulated and one merely realises

for the first time other people's miseries as well as one's own. The only sound thing is to hope the best for one's country, and to expect absolutely nothing for oneself in the future. To write down every one one loves as dead—and then if any of us are left we shall be surprised. To think of one's country's future and one's own happy past. The first is capable of vast improvement, as for the second, when all is said and done, we were a damned good family. *Qua* family, as good as Clouds. I couldn't have any more joy out of anything than I have from my family. I am glad we had that bit with Ivo at Hunstanton. I wish I had seen him as a Guardsman. What letters! The first one (' thousand singing legs ') perfect description and atmosphere; the second one full of jolly thought, and not the least self-conscious. Bless him. I am so awfully sorry for papa who loved him. Tell him how much I feel for him. He must write his sons off and concentrate upon his grandchildren which, thank God, exist.

I am sending this by Mary Herbert, who has been an angel. I am glad Mary Charteris has got Tom to console her. We will try and keep him here. We move to Cairo in a few days, and after the move I go out to Gallipoli. I should rather have stayed here on the chance of the Balkans as cavalry. Gallipoli is terribly dull—but *umberufen* very safe now, except for sickness. We have had very few men and no officers hit since August 21st. But the gloom and boredom and discomfort of life there seems the limit.—Good-bye, Darling, I love you till all's blue.      Ego.

I like that 'damned good family.' It is so exactly what Lord Edward would have written. Lord Elcho was Ego to his family, from his own childish rendering of his name, Hugo. Odd that this Ego should have been so utterly divorced from the taint of egoism.

I had heard enough of Lady de Vesci to esteem the privilege of being her guest. When she stood on the railway platform at Abbeyleix waiting for us she looked, in her flowing black garments, like a queen—a queen of poetry or a priestess. She had had A. E. for a guest once, and he had warmly admired her. He came as an angel unawares, sent down by the I.A.O.S.—the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society—to explain to the people of those parts co-operative dairying, banking, and such things. 'I soon felt,' she said, 'that they had sent me

something very remarkable. Just imagine expecting an ordinary lecturer and getting A. E. !'

Literature was held in honour at that house. It was such a quiet, intimate visit as one appreciates deeply when it is made to the elect, and these were, indeed, elect ladies. Ireland was held in great love there ; and in that summer of death it was good to enter into such a calm, benignant atmosphere. Just then love of Ireland seemed the one thing desirable : and Lady de Vesci spoke of the country with the most exquisite tenderness. 'This most tenderly loved country' was her constant phrase in speaking of it ; as to Lady Wemyss it was 'darling Ireland.' 'How troubled my brother would be about darling Ireland !' she had written in a letter : but she was Lord Edward's great-granddaughter, whereas Lady de Vesci was a Scotswoman, Lord Wemyss' sister—so true it is that when Ireland makes her own of one who is not born hers that one may love her beyond her own children.

It was a privilege to be there. Sorrow never wore a brighter face. Lady Wemyss talked of many things of great interest to me about Mr. Wyndham's Irish Chief-Secretaryship, and as her hazel eyes sparkled with vivacity one was irresistibly reminded of her collateral ancestress, Lady Sarah Lennox, perhaps the most fascinating woman of the eighteenth century, which is to say a good deal.

The little circle was reading—with a keen appreciation of what was fine in the new books—*How Jonas Found His Enemy*, that fine spiritual romance of Dr. Greville MacDonald, which one imagines must be of the things that endure when much that is acclaimed passes away into oblivion.

I was deeply impressed by the magnanimity of spirit in Lady de Vesci's deep affection for the people about Abbeyleix. She had been a devoted wife, was a disconsolate widow, and in the Land League days there had been trouble and estrangement between her husband and his tenants. There was only grief for those days,

never resentment, and always a sympathetic and generous understanding of the causes which led to an alienation that must have wrung her heart. The only stories she told of that time were of the kind and gentle things that had happened, despite all the trouble. She liked to dwell on the real goodness of the people where any one less great-hearted than she would have found abundant cause for bitterness. She had brought up her one child to love Ireland like herself.

There was magnanimity, too, in Lady Wemyss' talk of the terrible overthrow of Mr. Wyndham's hopes in 1904. If he had lived and achieved his desire, how different had been the history of these days ! He never was the same man afterwards. His sister, who shared so many of his feelings—‘ When we were children, George and I were the Fenians of the family,’ she said—had no condemnation for any of those who had hounded him out of his beneficent public life. No, she did not think that this one or that one was to blame. ‘ He was so full of all he was going to do for Ireland,’ she said, ‘ that he could not help talking about it, and so it got to — and —.’ I remembered Lady Glenconner saying, ‘ My brother is nothing if not magnanimous.’

I shall always remember the Sunday evening when I walked with Lady de Vesci through the overgrown gardens. She was only at the house for a visit, and it was shut up for the greater part of the year. No one cared for the gardens when she was not there. One could see how beautiful they had been ! Everything was overgrown : the fountain was dry ; the nymphs and goddesses of the gardens had green tears running down their discoloured marble cheeks. It must have been a beloved garden. The lady who had loved and mourned it walked there a queen—an exiled queen.

Afterwards we went into the church where a marble statue of her husband lay like a Knight Templar over against a corresponding statue, both recumbent, wearing the strange and lonely dignity of the recumbent marble. Many people have said to me since that Lord de Vesci

was a most beautiful person. The sculptor had done his noble beauty no wrong. But these are holinesses. I must always be grateful for that hour.

After I came back from that visit I realised a desire I had always had from the time I read a story of Henry James's far back in the 'Nineties, *The Altar of the Dead*.

I had always wanted an Altar of the Dead for myself, so that the beloved dead should not feel forgotten. And now the need became more urgent. Many people who had been comforted by my letters and verses had been sending me the photographs of their boys, asking for prayers for them.

There is a room at Brookhill, a long, narrow slit of a room, furnished, when we came, as a bedroom, of which the people about the place spoke as 'The Chapel.' Asking questions, I discovered that a Catholic family of Blakes had had Brookhill for five years, and had used this room as a chapel, having Mass said in it regularly. Its use was plain enough when one had the clue. A few hooks in a recessed door would have taken surplices. There is a bell outside the door to call the household to Mass. There is a table to serve as a vesting-table, and arrangements for water and washing.

The bedroom furniture went packing. The floor was stained and a rug laid upon it. The window was filled in with an Ecce Homo, a Mater Dolorosa, and adoring Angelico angels. Sacred pictures were hung on the walls. A big Crucifix took the central place; below it a long, low table covered with a fair, white cloth. On the table and hung about the Crucifix are the pictures of the Ever-Living. A little rosy lamp throbs there always, with candles, blessed on Candlemas, in low, silver candlesticks. There are the flowers in their season. To either side of the Crucifix are two parchment scrolls. At the head of the long list of names on one is: 'There were boys . . . in the streets thereof.' At the foot is: 'For whom thanks be to our Lord Jesus Christ.' At the head of the other scroll is: 'Fear not, little Flock.' There is nothing else but a *prie-Dieu*.

So my desire was achieved, I have my Altar and my Oratory. I dare avow that it is to be felt at the centre of the house—a Silence, a Recollection, a Peace. I have never gone there that I did not feel *They* were glad, especially when I came after an absence. When I went away for an absence I always said good-bye to them. I have always felt they were sorry to see me go. Very few of those young knights were known to me while they lived, but I feel them a bodyguard. I think it is they who have banished fear from the house.

I have brought in soldiers sometimes to see the Oratory. Once it was half a dozen Royal Scots whom we entertained on their passage through, one Sunday. I asked them first if they were Presbyterians and strict. ‘Not so strict,’ they said. I had been afraid they would think my Oratory Popish. But no ; they entered tip-toe : they went away with eyes dimmed, speaking in a whisper. To be sure they had all been at the Front.

Some people say : ‘But how sad !’ I do not feel it sad. I feel as though the little place welcomed *Them* in from the night and rain. So safe and happy is it that I have knelt there at midnight in the long, light summer quite alone, with no light but the faint light of the lamp.

It is primarily for the soldiers, but there are others whom the soldiers would recognise.

An imaginative Irish maid-servant said to me one day : ‘Sure, who could be afraid of a house with that holiness in it ?’ She added that *They* would take care of my own boys.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE COLD WINTER

We had more visitors at Brookhill that autumn than we had had in a year at Carradoyne. At one time all our bedrooms were occupied. We had Mrs. T. P. O'Connor ; we had Lord Killanin ; we had Susan and Susan's niece, and Lily Yeats, and Margreita Beer, and various soldiers, as well as our own circle. One morning in the small hours our elder boy arrived home for a week's leave before going to Salonika. The cadet came back from Sandhurst. There were other visitors. It was as compared with Carradoyne, as though the clock had struck and the Palace of the Sleeping Beauty had come alive.

That winter was given up again to work and the increasingly great correspondence. 1916 ended with a great sadness in the tragical death of my publisher of many years—Mr. Reginald Smith of Smith and Elder. He had published my second novel, *The Dear Irish Girl*, in 1898, and since then some score or more novels, with my *Twenty-Five Years*; *Lord Edward: a Study in Romance*; and *The Book of Flowers* (in the latter I collaborated with Miss Frances Maitland, whose address I should very much like to have). He very rarely turned a book of mine from his door, never a novel—and if he had to say No he said it with such evident discomfort to himself that one had to assure him hastily that it did not really matter a bit, or very little, though that was something he could hardly believe. He had the grand manner which, alas, is fast disappearing. He had a profound respect for the traditions of the great publishing house which he represented and for the *Cornhill Magazine* which he edited. I don't think Thackeray and the great

days were ever quite out of his mind. Therefore, being kind-hearted, he even overestimated the blow rejection meant to an author. When he received you into his room, with the three long windows overlooking Waterloo Place, you always felt as though you were consulting a West-End physician and your fate was in doubt. He was typically English. There was an English simplicity about him. Once, as I tucked a quite substantial cheque into my purse, I said: 'I come to Smith and Elder for prestige, and I go to other publishers for money,' which was only an audacious jest, but I left him looking a little bewildered. He was very kind, indeed, about money, and was always willing to pay down—an excellent and too uncommon thing in publishers. One always felt assured of honourable dealing with this great old firm. When my first novel *The Dear Irish Girl* most unexpectedly ran into two or three editions, Mr. Reginald Smith at once raised my royalty by 10 per cent.

Ah, well, the passing of 15 Waterloo Place, S.W., is like the passing of an epoch. Those who might have carried on the tradition died, one on the battle-field, the other in a German prison. The War killed Reginald Smith as it killed those two. He belonged to all sorts of things that are gone for ever—to the old decorous, seemly, and honourable life of England of the Victorian days. I think *that* life had begun to break up even before the War, with the arrival of the *novus homo*, and the love of eating and drinking and the baser luxuries of existence which gave him his chance.

I remember my first visit to 15 Waterloo Place. I approached it in a spirit that Reginald Smith would have appreciated. Lest I should arrive uncomfortably hot I took a hansom; it was a very hot day of a hot English summer; but, after all, though I arrived beautifully cool, the octagon room, lit from overhead and not airy, with the pictures of the Brontës and George Eliot and all the great people round the walls, to say nothing of the excitement of the visit, made me present myself the colour of a beetroot.

Reginald Smith usually met his visitors on the stairs as they were being shown up, for he escorted the parting guest to the street door always ; it was part of his old-fashioned courtesy. If one did not meet him on the stairs he was always at the door of his room to receive you, and you sat down in a chair from which some very distinguished person had just arisen. Everything about 15 Waterloo Place kept up the old dignified traditions, and Reginald Smith's secretary, Mr. Howard, was his understudy. For a long time we thought Reginald Smith wrote the body of his letters as well as the signature, or at least dictated it. But the letters were just the same after he was gone ; it was still his voice speaking, and at last we recognised Mr. Howard, for whom that severance must have meant many endings.

I am glad my publishing began—almost began—with a house of such traditions. I could remember the time, not so far off, when editors and publishers were god-like persons to me. I have not altogether lost the habit, so far as certain editors and certain publishers are concerned. Could I have kept it if I had begun writing for and publishing with Mr. So-and-So or Messrs. Blank ?

The ‘almost begun’ has reference to the fact that I did not quite begin with Smith and Elder. My first novel was published by Laurence and Bullen, both delightful people, but hardly business men at all, I think. They were among the very few publishers I have known who would have turned the largest circulation from their doors if it had no literary quality, as it usually has not. A. H. Bullen used to groan discontentedly over the fact that people who could write poetry or read their classics should bother writing novels. The last volume of poems he published for me was on an entirely unbusinesslike basis. ‘I’ve just enough paper to publish a little edition of you,’ he said ; ‘but I shan’t publish any more.’ So that meant a limited edition, and the book, *Experiences*, went out of print almost immediately. It is one of my best books.

I had another delightful publisher at one time who

never could be got to make up his accounts. He was adamant if you asked him to pay for anything ; but on the other hand he was always ready to lend you fifty pounds.

1917 arrived with savage weather which continued over Easter. On Easter Sunday, 9th April, a neighbour who was with us for the week-end stood gloomily by the windows computing how many lambs and sheep should be lost to him in the snow-drifts. We were feeding our own animals on ivy, the fields being deep in snow. There were three months of it. At night, if you lifted a window-blind, you saw the starved little spectres of rabbits going against the white background. They ate the bark off all the trees, and across the snow there was a path trodden of many little furry feet going to the trees. The high walls of snow, with the tunnel cut between, were by the roadside on May Day. That winter, I should think, effectually cured all who had hankerings after ‘a good old-fashioned winter.’

When it was at its most malignant I got a frost-bitten ear, accompanied by neuralgia. Although I walk steadily in all weathers I have sometimes found an enforced house-keeping not disagreeable. There are so many things waiting for a time when one *must* stay indoors. But unfortunately the malaise was against all the things I dearly wanted to do. I did very much less work than usual, although my letters continued, and to be cut off work is a sad thing for one who cannot lay down the pen for a day or two without secret desires after it, as though it were drink or a drug. People have sometimes said to me that in such and such conditions I need not work so hard. I have heard them aghast. Why, if writing was drink I should be a drunkard : I simply could not refrain from it. It has filled my life with happiness.

Midmost of the malaise I had an agreeable distraction, which almost made me forget all about it. An editor in Tunbridge Wells discovered that chapter of my *Middle Years*, entitled ‘Southborough,’ and started a discussion

in his paper, heading it 'Miss Katharine Tynan's Social Indictment of Tunbridge Wells.'

Well, that was hardly accurate. The chapter had very little to do with the Wells, as I pointed out later. Southborough was another matter. The most kindly and courteous opening article, accompanied by a long editorial note, was written by a London editor living at the Wells. He was followed up by another literary man, equally kind. Indeed Tunbridge Wells, seeing that it was supposed to be indicted, behaved most handsomely. It was not until the tale of my wickedness reached Southborough that the fun began.

I had no idea Southborough was so opinionated. When I had read the many letters from people who had chosen Southborough for its beautiful situation as a place to live in, and had been haughtily turned down by Southborough society, I began to be conscience-stricken, because, by comparison, Southborough had opened her arms to us. Who could have thought of the dreadful penalties of the social boycott at such places as Southborough? I had really no quarrel with Southborough society except that on the whole it was dreadfully dull and narrow. When I wrote the offending chapter I had no intention of giving offence. I was, in a manner of speaking, talking to myself, recalling old memories, and I *did* make grateful references to the people who were not to be classed as dull and narrow in my knowledge of the place.

Presently the heading of the column or two of the *Kent and Sussex Courier*, which was devoted to my critics and my friends for some weeks, became 'The Social Indictment of Southborough.' The editor had invited correspondence. It came with a rush and a tumble. If I was not overwhelmed, if I am able to select a bouquet of flowers from the many letters, despite my being a thin-skinned person, it must be because I was and am sustained by the knowledge that I was avenging other people's wrongs, while being quite unaware of it or of any of my own.

But I must have had wrongs of my own which accounted for the otherwise inexplicably stifling atmosphere of the beautiful place, or else my neighbours made themselves out in their anger to be more ill-natured than they really were. I may own up that I had said that the spectacle, as seen from a high window of the Hand and Sceptre Hotel at the top of Southborough Common, of many old ladies, clad in black, crawling up the many little paths of the Common to the church at the top where Pendennis was married, was like a procession of black beetles. It was : I had to be accurate. The statement was provocative. Here are some of the 'back answers.'

In her entomological researches on Southborough Common it is strange that Miss Tynan did not discover that crawling among the black beetles was a specimen of the yellow caterpillar (*Femina Peganoida*).—ANOTHER ENTOMOLOGIST.

So a certain gifted novelist did not like Southborough ! I am not surprised. On turning up her record in *Who's Who* I find that her favourite recreation is 'Talking to a Good Listener.' All is explained. To be talked to death by a gifted novelist is what some evangelical black beetles cannot stand. And they showed it.—AUDITOR TANTUM.

What is Mrs. Hinkson grumbling at ? Surely she ought to be most grateful that so many black beetles are gathered into one internment camp, leaving the rest of the country freer for her to live in. The pity is that she ever came to live among the poor dears on whom she now treads with all her weight. I wonder if many of them have been crushed by her ponderous onslaught, and whether those she praised are grateful ? The question is whether those who knew Mrs. Hinkson and the black beetles would rather have the black beetles or Mrs. Hinkson, and whether they were as glad to be quit of her as she of them.—NEUTRAL.

I never met Mrs. Hinkson socially, but remember seeing her walking on Southborough Common, and was told she was a writer, 'Katharine Tynan.' The name was unknown to me—mental mouldiness, no doubt. I thought at the time how much

more slightly her appearance would have been dressed in black than in colours. . . .

I sympathise with the unfortunate neighbours whose Sunday rest was disturbed by the refined Sunday pastimes of the Hinksons.—**AN OLD LADY WHO DID NOT CALL.**

I shall be much obliged if you will find room in your paper for this explanation of some of the causes of Mrs. Hinkson's unpopularity. Mrs. Hinkson, not having the power of seeing herself as others see her, will perhaps be surprised to learn the opinions of strangers. . . . She says that she made as much noise as she possibly could while playing croquet on Sundays. That her family certainly did, and on every other day of the week also. My garden is only separated from the one they occupied by a wooden fence, which shuts out sight but not sound. During the summer they were there I had no peace nor pleasure in my garden. Children yelling and screaming, dogs barking, goats bleating, and the never-ending hammering of croquet balls kept up a perfect pandemonium from morning till night. . . . The black beetles might well have retaliated by comparing her to a large yellow slug.—**A RESIDENT OF SOUTHBOROUGH.**

Well, under the sledge-hammer attacks—I have omitted one or two manifestly unfair and untrue statements of the ‘Resident’—I might well have been crushed as flat as the flattest black beetle, if I had not had the other side to uphold me. I think Southborough must have thought I deserved what I got, for no kindly word came from there, but I had plenty of kindness from Tunbridge Wells, beyond the ardent championship of my dear Sarah Grand, who took these letters dreadfully to heart. Side by side with the asperities I have quoted, there were many letter-writers who expressed their thanks to some one who had said what they wanted to say. ‘We spent sixteen miserable months there,’ wrote one lady, ‘before we shook the dust of Southborough from our feet for ever.’ ‘I am obliged to this lady,’ wrote another, ‘for exposing this un-Christian conduct. Life is sad enough without such cruel and silly manifestations’; while ‘A Presbyterian’ denounced the line of demarcation drawn so tightly in

such places as Southborough. ‘ You must be a Tory, and outside their Church you are a heretic. I am delighted with Katharine Tynan.’

My copy of *The Middle Years* is as unsightly as some of the Southborough ladies found me, for the many letters it contains describing the cruelties of the social boycott which people had suffered at Southborough. I suppose such a thing can be very cruel. We never knew that the system existed. When we asked a lady to tea and she did not come we only thought she had forgotten. When some people did not call we put it down to four-fifths of us being Papists, a thing as rare as a white blackbird at Southborough. We never even suspected that a certain lady, who was very friendly to us, had powers of life and death over society in Southborough, and apparently sometimes wielded them unmercifully. Some of the other side justified my misdeeds—for example, the one who thought I had been rather unkind but still wrote :

The influence of church and chapel over the place seemed to make the residents shrink from being seen at any entertainment not run by the religious bodies, and I have many times been told that to attend anything of the kind meant social and religious excommunication for the unfortunate who had been caught in the act. I well remember the feeling aroused when a prominent resident offered to build a hall where people might spend some of their leisure hours in innocent recreation. The controversy which raged round this proposal was carried on during all the years of my residence. Although the hall was eventually erected, the feeling when I left seemed to be as strong as ever. I have seen emissaries of the church people watching the people who entered the hall when it was let for other than a religious purpose. Is it to be wondered at that hypocrisy and cant were rife in the place ?

Dear Barry O’Brien, who visited Tunbridge Wells that summer, while *The Middle Years* was still in great demand at the libraries, wrote to me that the real offence I had given was in describing a picture (or two) called ‘ The Straight and Narrow Way,’ which was

apparently a favourite in Southborough. In this picture (or one of them) among all the other Doomed, rushing headlong to perdition, *there was a whole train-load of soldiers.* I am glad Southborough has changed its mind about the soldiers. I should like to think it had made a bonfire of that and other uncharitable pictures and books and leaflets ; and I do hope it does not any longer patronise those obvious rascals ‘The Escaped Monk’ and ‘The Runaway Nun.’ I may commend to its inhabitants the story of Father James Healy, who was asked to explain the reason why a Catholic priest should have changed his religion. ‘It is always one of two reasons, my dear sir—Punch or Judy.’

What a novel there is in such places ! That gentle satirist, Jane Austen, lived at Tunbridge in the dip under Southborough. She would have made a meticulous masterpiece of the life and the social autocracy. I may not return to study it again at close hand, even if I were equal to the subject. But all the same there were some very nice people at Southborough, and I am perfectly well aware that I should not have said ‘beetle’ despite the inevitableness of the comparison. And I did get in a summing-up reply, and was mean enough to rejoice in the superiority of my practised pen over the angry people of Southborough, while I enumerated those to whom my criticism could not possibly apply.

## CHAPTER XXX

### ALLEVIATIONS

LET me, before I end with the shadowed years, pay tribute to some of those whose kindness and companionship made our exile more tolerable. There were some people who would have been kind to us if we were only near enough. If we had settled near Castlebar or Westport, as we might have done, there would have been plenty of society of the bridge-playing and tennis-playing kind. But I was never sorry for my isolation at Claremorris, where no one played bridge or tennis, because I know that with the best will in the world I should only have offended my neighbours, since I have so little time for social recreations, and in country towns the people are apt to take their recreation strenuously, as a business. Not that I am above bridge. Some of the pleasantest of my English days were spent with the bridge-playing coteries of Chipperfield and King's Langley—but my particular war-work, which I cannot help believing, with humility, I was sent to Claremorris to do, admitted of little time for recreation. Even reading a novel became somewhat of a difficulty for lack of time.

Let me see! During my three years and a bit in Mayo I have, as a mere matter of book-making, written nine novels besides *Lord Edward : a Study in Romance*, which is something more than a novel: two volumes of reminiscences, three volumes of poetry, two school-books, besides a great number of short stories, articles, etc. I am not specially proud of this facility of mine; it has produced a good deal of honest work, with, of course, a good deal of necessary pot-boiling, and it has

made some few people happy beside myself. When, in addition, I had taken on my correspondence with the mourners of the War there was not much time left for social observances.

Now I come to think of it, the Churches had most to do with the alleviation of our lot. There was, first of all, the Canon. The Canon took us by the hand at our first coming. He had taken the R.M., while yet I was enjoying a bachelor existence at Shankill. The Canon is an historian and a member of various learned societies and Governing Boards of Colleges and Universities. He is a fine, stately, dignified man, very handsome and with beautiful manners. The best type of Catholic ecclesiastic is hard to beat for charm and bonhomie, and he is of that type—in all his dealings a fine gentleman.

Before the R.M. had taken up his duties he wrote to welcome him to Mayo. A little later he was welcoming him to his house and hospitality, with a priests' dinner thrown in. Now a priests' dinner is not open to every heretic. Canon Hannay has lamented to me that in all his years at Westport he had never been at a priests' dinner. These functions are supposed, by outsiders, to be Gargantuan banquets, where the wine or punch flows, like the story-telling and the wit, fast and free. I don't know whether the Gargantuan character exists only in the mind of the Protestant Peri without the gates. I have a memory of a Co. Dublin priest saying to me once with solemnity : 'I never sat to So-and-So's table but once. There were some other priests there and one or two laymen. The soup was good and the wine was good, but you'd never guess, Katharine, what he set us down to eat—why, a ham and a pair of geese ! There was a dinner to set before priests !'

That belonged to a plenteous day. I have sat at Irish dinners, which could not be called priests' dinners, where tongue and chicken, boiled mutton, roast beef, ham, turkey, and ducks were all to be found. I hope we shall all be off rations before this appears in print. Still the prodigality of the eighteenth century affected late

Victorian hospitalities. In my experience of the West no such surfeit of good things is to be found at a priest's or any other dinner table.

The R.M. accompanied the Canon to the priests' dinner and enjoyed himself immensely. When they had returned to the Canon's house, where he had a bed for the night, the Canon said to him : 'I might have had my doubts about taking you, but I had a feeling that I was right to do it. It wasn't the first priests' dinner you 'd been to ; you acted as one to the manner born.'

That friendship, so well begun, has continued and flourished over our three years and more. The Canon is, like all the best priests I have known, a boy at heart. He is full of good stories himself, and always ready to roar over yours ; he is a bookman, with a well-furnished library, as well as an ecclesiastic and a gentleman, and he is the best of hosts and good fellows, if he will excuse such a phrase. He has that peculiar frankness with those he trusts which belongs to the best type of man, and he does not at all object to criticism of his order where the criticism is in reason.

I suppose it was an aftermath of the Penal Days which made the priest sacrosanct in the Ireland of my youth. A very prickly quickset hedge surrounded the priests, by the will of the people, in those days ; and not only the priests, but everything connected with the Religion. That was the time when a careful parent would rebuke you for saying you did not like a certain priest with the remark that no one ever came to good who was against the priests. All that has passed by, and I am sure the priests do not regret it. There can be very little serious criticism of them as priests and men, though one may criticise if one is against them in politics. Their conduct is practically beyond reproach. They are the best of men and Irishmen.

You talk to the Canon as one man to another. There are no barriers. Years ago a Catholic man said to me that he did not like priests because they professed too high a standard. Well, priests like the Canon and

Father Martin and Father Michael of our western days, or Father Gilbert of our English days, professed nothing at all. If they were better than other people, they pretended no immunity for themselves or their class. Yet scandal is practically unknown and the priest is every one's friend who will trust him.

The Canon's nephew, also a priest, is a college professor, a slight unassuming young man, who published last year a book on Horace, which delighted the *Times Literary Supplement* and others of the great English reviews. No man ever carried learning more lightly. He, too, can tell a good story, and, although he has as yet nothing of the Canon's stateliness, he is not behind him in beautiful manners.

Father Martin is far more of a recluse than the Canon. He is also a student: he lives in a place so lonely that he has told me he often went out on the side of the road to exchange a word with a passing peasant about the pigs or the potatoes. He confessed also that his clock, furnished with the Westminster chimes, was great company on a winter night. He lives in a house square to all the winds that blow, a house of many windows, which is flooded with sun when it is obtainable, and beaten furiously by the winds and rains when *they* are obtainable, which is much oftener. He has set a little coppice of pines and other conifers to make him a shelter from the winds when it grows: as yet they but add to the bareness.

He is a delicate man, very like an early portrait—Richmond's I think—of Cardinal Newman, very young-looking: he might be only thirty, though I suspect he has a good many more years to his credit than that. The fourth Wednesday of the month has for some time, and before emergency work broke up the established order of Courts, been a red-letter day to him and to us. To me it means, while the Court is sitting, a quiet morning's talk, surrounded on every side by books—piles of them on the tables and chairs as well as in the bookcases—with one who knows the people through and

through, and in his easy way discovers them for you, illuminating unsuspected places by his knowledge and sympathy. He is a subscriber to *The Times* and the *Times* Book Club, so he is well in touch with new books and affairs : with the new poetry and belles-lettres as with politics and the big issues of war and statesmanship.

I think the many windows of the house have a relation to Lady Aberdeen's health crusade. I remember a splendid day last summer when he had to draw blinds to shut out the dazzle of sun.

'The climate's changing,' said he. 'I remember some years ago when the rain began one May Day and never stopped till the end of the following year.'

I leave Father Martin and his books with the company of his thoughts and his Westminster chimes, for of late the sequence of fourth Wednesdays has been broken, and we have missed more than a delicate and gracious hospitality, and go on to Father Michael, who came to his little country parish from being 'Head of a College.' Father Michael is a travelled man. He spent two years in America, and he has an immense admiration for 'The States,' as well as some additions acquired there to an already rich vocabulary. 'The States' is to Father Michael what London, Paris, or Rome is to other people. You find him reading the *Literary Digest* where Father Martin and the Canon read *The Times* and the *Spectator*. So great is his admiration for the Stars and Stripes that he will 'rise' for a word against them. But whatever else he took away from the Land of the Dollar, he took no materialism. With a considerable amount of shrewdness never was a man less worldly. The bishop who made him head of a college was a wise Father in God. The college, be it understood, was a college for the training of young priests. Certain precious lessons Father Michael could have imparted. He does not even trouble for his daily bread : he trusts : if you were a mean person you need never give Father Michael anything, and it must be remembered that the Irish priests live on the voluntary offerings of their flocks, He

explained to me once that no list of donations was read from the altar because he who had given less might be put at a disadvantage with him who had given more. I acknowledge that this practice of perfection is hard on Father Michael's curate.

You may begin by thinking Father Michael eccentric in speech : you very soon come to find him lovable and admirable. He preaches quaint sermons, and quite enjoys the amusement he causes. It was Father Martin who said humbly : 'It must often be hard on people of education to listen to our sermons, for we are not trained to preach.' Well, Father Michael has a great reputation as a preacher with his flock. I have often noticed that the Irish peasant never laughs at a sermon, though the sermons are occasionally very picturesque. When the more sophisticated person is laughing, very often to the equal enjoyment of the preacher, the peasant is finding depths of profundity even in a jest.

Father Michael it was who described the plight of the priests under the Penal Code in a startling phrase :

'It isn't so very long ago since the Irish priests were running over the hills and valleys of Ireland with a five-pound note on their heads.'

But amusement gives place to edification when you find of what a real stuff of holiness Father Michael is made.

Our first introduction to him was, like the lady who was introduced through a cow—by means of a rick of turf. Our predecessor had got rid of all his turf, leaving us to start life in Mayo in mid-winter, fuelless. We discovered that Father Michael had bought the large rick of turf and his curate the small one. As soon as they knew our plight, each laid his rick at our service, not accepting a penny of profit on the transaction.

Some time ago we were again turfless, with turf at famine prices, for the wet weather of 1917 beginning just about the time the people had done their big cropping and persisting, all the turf except that belonging to a fortunate few lay out in the bogs all winter. We were on a hunt for turf when Father Michael came driv-

ing round a corner of the road on his way to a Conference. He stopped to speak, and we asked him the monotonous question, ‘Do you know any one who has any turf for sale?’ ‘Are ye out of it?’ ‘We are.’ ‘Johnny’ (to his man) ‘there’s a rick I bought last year not touched?’ ‘There is,’ said Johnny, not looking round. Disapproval was in the set of Johnny’s shoulders. ‘It’s good, dry turf, isn’t it?’ ‘It is.’ ‘You can have that,’ said Father Michael. ‘But will you have enough for yourself?’ ‘Och, sure, what do I want with it? I’ve enough to go on with till the cutting. Johnny, will the Resident Magistrate’s man be able to find the rick?’ ‘Annybody’ll instruct him,’ said Johnny gloomily. ‘How much?’ ‘Not a penny beyond what I paid for it in the bog last year.’

It is good to hear Father Michael laugh despite the sciatica which cripples him, and sometimes makes ascent and descent of the low altar steps a difficult thing. Sick calls in the winter are not conducive to the cure of sciatica, when one sometimes has to ford a river broken loose in flood, with water to the knees or above them. Indeed there is a deal of unselfish holiness in these West of Ireland priests.

One evening when Lord Killanin was staying with us, he met me on the stairs. He, by the way, has an uncommon interest in priests and sermons.

‘Your parish priest has just arrived,’ he said, ‘and another priest, a little man with spectacles. Who is the other priest?’ ‘The parson,’ we said with some pride, for we congratulate ourselves that ours is one of the very few houses in Connaught where the priest and the parson sit down to the same mahogany. The parson was, too, among our alleviations in the loneliest winter with his gift of music, his cheerfulness, his kindly common sense.

I must say a word of gratitude to the Fitzgerald-Kennys, who, almost alone among the county people, a few of whom called, extended us the hand of friendship. They represented for us the qualities with which we

endowed the Irish race for the children, while yet they lived in England. It was fortunate, perhaps, that they did not come first to Mayo, else they might have thought our tales fairy-tales, except for a very few people who justified us. The Fitzgerald-Kennys, living in their big, squarely-built, rather gaunt and comfortable house, typically West of Ireland, near Lough Mask, are the embodiment of the Irish virtues of hospitality and generosity. Their house was the first built in these parts after Catholic Emancipation, before which no Catholic could build or live in a house of more than one story. The newly-emancipated built their house three stories and wide in proportion. The next Catholic house was Moore Hall, now the property of George Moore, the novelist. Moore Hall went one better than Clogher House, being, in every way, a size bigger than Clogher. There is a little group just there, by Lough Mask, of old Catholic families who survived the Penal Days—Blakes, Fitzgerald-Kennys, Moores. I dare not say Mr. George Moore is representative. Clogher House, with its big rooms, its private chapel, and all the things that belong to its old consideration is a fragrant place, fragrant of kindness, of gaiety, of sweetness of heart, of hospitality. One leaves those kindly doors laden with gifts of fruit, of vegetables, and flowers, even though one has a garden of one's own. Yes, indeed, the Fitzgerald-Kennys are to be counted of the alleviations.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### ONE OF THE SUMMERS

IN that May of 1917—such a beautiful sudden rushing May with us—our boy in Macedonia had what he called ‘a little scrap,’ when he and his patrol were all but captured by Bulgars. One thing he told us had the literary sense and gave one a thrill! ‘It was pitch dark,’ he wrote, ‘the moon not having yet risen, and as we remained perfectly still we could hear the naked feet of the Bulgars running in the long grass which here grows above your head.’

A little later Major Patrick Butler, D.S.O., whom we have known from his small boyhood, wrote to Pamela :

‘ I must write to tell you that your brother has done so well that he has qualified for a Military Cross. I do hope he gets it. Let me quote his adjutant’s words in a letter just received.

“ The Brigadier wished to secure —— from incursions of over-inquisitive patrols, so that they would not become aware of ——. He therefore ordered that two strong patrols should go forward —— and keep out all enemy seekers after knowledge. Our hero (that is your brother) was detailed for the first of these patrols. He had—— men and a gun with him, and about —— yards in front of our outpost line his scouts bumped into the enemy. They found that the latter were too strong, and were even adventurous and apparently bent on making prisoners, for they pursued our scouts so that these had to fall back on the main patrol. The enemy at about three times our strength came up with Hinkson’s party, and a lively scrap ensued. He eventually drove

them back with Lewis gun and rifle fire and—best of all—in spite of his extremely uncomfortable position he hung on until dawn, when he withdrew having achieved his object in keeping off the enemy patrols."

'I knew he would be all right. They are all enthusiastic about him. I do hope he gets the Cross. Anyhow his Divisional General has made a note of his name.'

Major Butler, like his distinguished father, belongs to the Royal Irish Regiment, and has been and is exceedingly kind to our boy.

That May, too, our younger boy got his commission in the Dublins. He had set it before him to join one of the Irish regiments most cut up by the war, and the Dublins seemed to fill the bill, besides which he and Pamela have a peculiar devotion to Dublin. He went off to join the 3rd Battalion at Cork, being still nearly a year under age for active service, and Pam went paying a round of visits: so we were alone till we joined her one sultry day of the beautiful June weather.

We were in Dublin at the time of the release of the Sinn Fein prisoners, and I went down to Westland Row to see Madame Markievicz come in. It was long since I had seen anything of the sort, for my years since the old Parnell days had been, till 1912, staid and sober English ones. To be out of the crowd I went into the hotel opposite the station and looked on at the scene with something of painful interest, for it recalled the days of long ago. How intrepid one had been then, going into the packed crowds—by night too! This was a daylight crowd, a very quiet, orderly one. The Dublin Metropolitan Police, those genial giants, kept a passage for the traffic with shoulders and feet set square. They say the foot of a Dublin Metropolitan is equal to any one else's yard. So vast is it that one has an idea that it could be walked on without causing pain, as though sensation could not belong to the whole of such a foot. For a time trams continued to pass, with young ladies in white on the top waving Republican flags. All the Dublin women and babies were out, and small boys

were balancing themselves dangerously on the spiked area railings, clambering up lamp-posts, squatted on the railway bridge, anywhere and everywhere there was a good view and a dangerous one. Now and again the crowd sang the 'Soldier's Song,' or cheered to relieve its pent-up excitement. After a time the trams ceased to run through Westland Row, and passengers were transferred, proceeding on foot through that crowded thoroughfare, which was quite an easy thing to do, since the crowd was agreeable and parted easily to let people through. The military were held in reserve, but very wisely out of sight. The D.M.P.'s were quite equal to the job.

Now and again a soldier passed, and excited no more attention than any one else. One of the hotel staff standing near me, an English girl, could hardly be prevailed upon to look, she had been so frightened in the Rebellion. But it was a very harmless crowd.

Close by the railway station exit stood a motor, with a chauffeur standing by negligently. The car belonged to Dr. Kathleen Lynn, the daughter of a West of Ireland parson, who is associated with the Sinn Fein movement..

There were several false rumours of the arrival. The mail train was late. But like a good many other things—appendicitis for example—there was no doubt when she did come. Ireland is nothing if not dramatic. As Madame emerged from the station the chauffeur's coat was off, and there he stood a volunteer in full uniform. A little later she passed, standing up, holding out her hands to the crowd who were clasping them and kissing them.

A few seconds later she was gone—the crowd swept after her, and the street was empty with the sadness settling down on it of summer evening in the city.

A curious little incident happened earlier in the day. Pamela and I had turned into a smart shop to speak to a lady in a highly responsible position. We had known her as a governess in a Protestant and Conservative family of our acquaintance, and the position

she occupied demanded no less those steadyng and assuring convictions. She said to us very unexpectedly, and with a quiet excitement : ‘Are you going to see Madame come in ?’ ‘Probably, if we can make time.’ ‘Do make time, and come to-morrow and tell me about it.’ The next day we came to tell her about it. ‘I heard her myself,’ she said. ‘I just got out in time to hear her at the Custom House.’

It was the triumph of the woman she was thinking of. It reminded me of what I had been told by an English Benedictine, that in the wild days of the Suffrage Movement the convents fluttered and were uneasy.

The next day we were in a very smart Dublin shop, and the elderly man who attended us, taking our politics for granted, cast his eyes up to Heaven in dramatic horror over the release of the Sinn Fein prisoners and their reception, piously wishing that all the disturbing elements were put down with a strong hand and the good old days of the gentry were come back. He protested too much. ‘I believe,’ said I, ‘you are a Sinn Feiner yourself.’ His eyes watered : he giggled convulsively, while he appealed to a young lady behind the counter just to hear what the lady had accused him of. She looked away absent-mindedly, remarking : ‘I’m sure you’re not *that* anyway, Mr. Blank.’

We were at another counter a little later, when Madame came in with her dog and, standing quite near us, proceeded to buy herself a length of tulle to wear round her neck according to a fashion of the moment. It was most amusing to see the prisoner of Lewes Jail, who was wearing a very smart cornflower blue dress, select just the kind of tulle she wanted and arrange it about her neck.

While we watched her with interest there came the gentleman I had accused of being a Sinn Feiner, panting with excitement. ‘I came to tell you,’ he said, ‘that the Countess is in the shop. Perhaps you don’t know her by sight. If you will follow me I shall point her out to you.’

The morning following Madame's entry we went to poor Willie Redmond's Requiem Mass. We did not strive for good places, believing, erroneously as it turned out, that the centre of the church would be reserved. So we departed humbly to a side aisle and knelt among the people.

There had been a crowd in the street which swelled momentarily, much the same crowd as yesterday except that there were few men; the adventurous Dublin woman with a baby clasped to her breast and three or four others holding her skirts much in evidence. There was the same crowd of delightful Dublin urchins adorned indifferently with the Irish Republican colours and the soldier-father's regimental button. The police had no difficulty in making way for the motor-cars of the Commander-in-Chief, the Judges, and other highly placed persons. Every one who was any one in the official and social life of Dublin was there: and the old Archbishop, who was John Redmond's political enemy, officiated at the Mass. The people among whom I knelt had come to pray, not to stare. I am bound to say that there was plenty of room in the aisles.

Every one craned their necks to watch for John Redmond passing up to the front seat reserved for the mourners. Poor John Redmond, so soon to follow his beloved brother!

A little later, staying at a country house, I again came into accidental touch with Madame Markievicz. It was a West of Ireland country house, and she had been discussed by some visitors in an unfriendly fashion. There was a ten miles' drive to the station. The day we left, I had the front seat by the chauffeur, a loyal ex-soldier and a Protestant, whose little boy, the child of an English mother, had delighted us by his rendering of an Irish poem one day we visited the National School. We talked. Quite unexpectedly he mentioned Madame Markievicz.

'My father was stud-groom at Lissadell,' he said. 'He was terribly fond of his horses. He used to say he

could coax any horse : he didn't often fail, but when he did he was terribly cast down. He'd never spare himself : he couldn't bear to use the whip : he always said there was some way of getting at the horse without flogging if only he knew it.

'Well, one day, he had a terrible tussle with a devil of a horse, and, in the long run, he had to turn him into a loose-box and leave him there, kicking and squealing. He was quite worn-out and down-like about it, and he sat on a big stone in the yard to recover himself, and, heated and all as he was, he got a terrible chill that turned to pneumonia, and he all but died. He would have died if Miss Con hadn't sat up with him night after night and nursed him through it.'

'Another time my mother was near her confinement, and she was trying to wash the clothes in a tub in the kitchen and Miss Con came in, and she just put her away from the tub and washed out the clothes herself.'

'She was the pick of the basket,' he added ; 'she was a wild, kind girl.'

Some time that summer we were at Spiddal for a few days with Lord Killanin, who leads a feudal life there. No thought of Republicanism reaches you in Spiddal House, looking delightfully across Galway Bay to the Aran Islands and the coast of Clare. I'm sorry to say that I passed through Galway without seeing any of the sights *that* time. The most excellent of hosts had arranged for an afternoon of sight-seeing, but it was very hot weather when we started, and we had a couple of punctures, so that we arrived at Galway at five o'clock instead of at three. The punctures were worth it, for the delicious old man at Clare-Galway, wearing the white bawneen—*i.e.* woollen jersey—of the Aran Islanders, who remained bent double the whole time a puncture was being mended. He had a wonderful old, wrinkled face of curiosity : his old, gnarled hands were spread on his knees : he looked somehow the Spirit of the Past marvelling at the Present. If one could only have made a picture of him !

Lord Killanin took us down in his car to Spiddal, while our own went back home. On the sea wall going down by Salthill we saw the 'dry bathers.' A great portion of Connaught—the peasantry—go to Salt-hill every year for the 'dry bathing,' which consists of sitting on the sea wall and getting as much of the benefits of the salt water as is possible in that way.

A year earlier, on our way to Abbeyleix, we had been swamped between Roscommon and Athlone by 'dry-bathers' going to meet the Galway train at the latter station. We had first-class tickets and they had third, but do you suppose that mattered? Not a bit of it! We had a nice travelling companion, a rough-rider in the Welsh Guards, who had, with an engaging frankness and friendliness, showed us the photographs of his family. He was most obliging in helping in the women with their bundles and babies. We bore the incursion as one does in Ireland. At the next station a distracted-looking elderly porter prepared to usher in more 'dry-bathers'—we were already sitting on each other's knees. He saw the absurdity of it, but he was plainly at his wits' end as to where to bestow them. 'It'll only be a station or two,' he said tentatively. 'No, no,' I cried, and barred the door against further passengers. 'We are already most uncomfortable.'

He went off sorrowfully to another carriage, the 'dry-bathers' following. 'Th' impidence o' thim!' said the dry-bather who was sitting on my knee. 'Is it to desthroy us altogether they'd be doin'?'

'Sure, there's some people 'ud do or ax anything,' said the one who had eclipsed the Welsh Guardsman except for an ear and a bit of dust-brown hair.

I have said that life at Spiddal House was feudal. It is the one big house in a region of extreme poverty. All around are small cabins amid enormous boulders of rock; between the rock are little ravines which are cultivated down one side and up the other. Lord Killanin spends most of his time at Spiddal. His

country-town, so to speak, is the town of Galway. The fine road from Galway to Spiddal is jocularly known as ‘ Killanin’s Avenue.’ He knows every man, woman, and child about Spiddal, and probably in Galway town, and calls them by their Christian names. Spiddal House, originally a small country house, he has built on to and adorned with open loggias, very agreeable in a fine summer, and a square tower. The pillars of the loggia are decorated by a native artist. He has built a church, of which he is justly proud, from the design of an Irish architect of striking and original talent : it is lit dimly with Irish glass from the *atelier* of Miss Sarah Purser : all is native, and the whole effect is austerey charming. Doubtless it will take some time for the people, and many of the priests, to get used to it. They miss the cheerfulness of Munich glass and Munich painted statues, besprinkled liberally with gold.

Lord Killanin stands out among the West of Ireland peers as one who is not only a man of the world and affairs but one interested in art and literature. When he visited us he turned over with satisfaction the new books on our table, glancing at some precious privately-printed memoirs of soldiers fallen in the War, most highly gifted, beautiful and young, the very names of whom are as a fragrance. He expressed himself as delighted with ‘ the oasis of light and culture in the West,’ which he had found at Brookhill, and repeated the phrase many times as though he liked it, as we did.

Lord Killanin represented Galway in more than one Parliament before he went to the Upper Chamber. Once he won a hotly contested election by this argument. He has a persuasive voice, with, if not exactly such a brogue as made his father’s wit a richer thing, at least something that suggests a brogue.

‘ If a landslide was to blot out Galway to-morrow,’ he said to the electors, ‘ it would not very particularly affect Mr. So-and-So’—(the Nationalist candidate)—‘ although he would be sorry of course ; whereas, if a landslide were to blot out Galway, for me it would mean the end of all

things. Everything I cared for and was interested in would be involved in that landslide.'

He won the election on what is known as 'the Landslide Speech.'

After breakfast at Spiddal in the month of July we used to go down to the shore to see the salmon brought in glittering in the nets. It was not long after the memorable Clare election, and Lord Killanin told us how he had learnt the result one evening as he was watching the emptying of the salmon nets. Across the water he saw a sudden bright light. He watched it, thinking it was the light of a ship. Then another sprang up and another till the hilly coast of Clare was lit as far as he could see it. Then he knew that De Valera had won the seat, for that part of Clare was his stronghold. 'Mr. de Valera's constituency,' he always called the blue dimness lying across the Bay.

He liked to walk about Spiddal and show you everything. Down at the harbour he would stop to speak to a barefooted little boy, asking him for his brothers and sisters by name. He took us down the strongly built little pier with its breakwater. 'We had a wretched harbour here,' he said, 'and a breakwater that was washed away in every storm. George Wyndham came down here when he was Chief Secretary, and saw the need of a new pier and breakwater. 'I don't know how I can do it,' he said, 'there's no fund available for it.' Then he thought a bit. 'I have it,' he said joyfully. 'There's a surplus over from——' I forget from what public works there was a surplus. Anyhow he built the pier and breakwater for the poor fishermen of Spiddal, as he built the strong defences for the farmers of Ireland. May his memory be as imperishable in the hearts of the people.

One of those mornings at Spiddal I wrote a long letter to Francis Ledwidge, to whom I had not written for some time. It was, I find by my diary, the 27th of July. On the 31st I had a letter from him telling me about a long poem which he had dedicated to me, which appeared

later in the *English Review*. By the same post Lord Dunsany received the poem. On the 8th of August I heard that Francis Ledwidge had been killed on the morning of the 31st of July, just about the time his letter reached me.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### FRANCIS LEDWIDGE

I THINK it was in 1913 I met Francis Ledwidge with Lord Dunsany at the Private View of A. E.'s pictures in Dublin, which used to take place in the autumns of the incredible period, *Ante Bellum*. He was then contributing to the *Saturday Review*. He or some one else sent me a copy containing a poem of his within the week. He must then have been quite a new discovery.

He had a high-coloured, eager, winning face. Perhaps it was the excitement made the high colour. I remember that he was wrapped in a big frieze coat, as though some one had carried him off unawares to what used to be something of a fashionable function, and he, protesting that he was not dressed for the like, had wrapped himself up in the big coat. I can see the eager, gentle face, under the dark soft hair, with the desire to please obvious in it. He was very humble and deferential to an older writer. There was nothing self-conscious about him. He was entirely simple and sincere.

A couple of years passed before his first book came to me for review. Perhaps indeed it was 1912 when I first met him, for Lord Dunsany, in his Preface to *Songs of the Fields* over the date June 1914, mentions that two years earlier when he was 'wasting June' in London he received the copy-book of Francis Ledwidge's poems. He adds to the Preface a year later, when Francis Ledwidge had been nine months in the army and had attained to the rank of corporal. He served in Gallipoli, in Serbia, on the Western Front, was wounded once, not badly; went back again when the wound healed, and

was killed by a fragment of a shell on July 31st 1917, the first day of the new offensive.

I don't know how he can have got in the time in a grocer's shop in Dublin about which Lord Dunsany writes, telling us how he broke away and tramped thirty miles to his mother's cottage. That grocer's shop in Dublin must indeed have been a trial to the poet, though it is quite possible that he may have found some there to appreciate his gift. But he must have missed the seat by the roadside and the procession of the Seasons, the stars and the secret things of the fields and groves and 'the wind on the heath.'

Reviewing his first book I found an essential beauty—a Greek sense of beauty, to use a cliché and a rather worn-out one—perfect in phrases and moments, with as yet an unsure setting. He had not then quite mastered the art which came so easily that it had only just to be discovered. But his phrases were magical.

And wondrous, impudently sweet,  
Half of him passion, half conceit,  
The blackbird pipes adown the street.

And this of April :

And she will be in white, I thought, and she  
Will have a cuckoo upon either shoulder.

And again there is a lovely line :

Sweet as rain-water in the blackbird's flute.

All these lovely things gave assurance of the full beauty that came a few months later in *Songs of Peace*. I do not propose to quote from an already published book, which those who love poetry may acquire for themselves. By the time it was published he had become a traveller. He had been at pretty well all the Fronts of war. He had seen the dreadful things which all soldiers must see in these days. The Chariot of War had driven over him

and left him untouched. He was still the boy who sat by the roadside in Meath and loved the fields and the thorn-hedges and the long roads fringed with cow-parsley, and the blackbird's note, and the colour of blue with which all his poems are coloured, and his mother, and all simple and quiet loves. Reviewing *Songs of Peace* I had the thought to write to him. Apparently the letter travelled for some time before it reached him, but it did reach him and his answer is dated January 6, 1917. It is eagerly, enthusiastically friendly and grateful for the advance on my part. He was the most friendly thing alive while he was yet alive.

'If I survive the war,' he wrote, 'I have great hopes of writing something that will live. If not, I trust to be remembered in my own land for one or two things which its long sorrow inspired.'

'My books have had a greater reception in England, Ireland, and America than I had ever dreamt of, but I never feel that my name should be mentioned in the same breath with my contemporaries.'

'You ask me what I am doing. I am a unit in the Great War, doing and suffering, admiring great endeavour and condemning great dishonour. I may be dead before this reaches you, but I will have done my part. Death is as interesting to me as life. I have seen so much of it from Suvla to Strumnitz and now in France. I am always home-sick. I hear the roads calling, and the hills, and the rivers wondering where I am. It is terrible to be always home-sick.'

'I don't like to send you a poem in pencil. If I can borrow a fountain pen I will transcribe one for you. If I go home again I should certainly like to come and see you. I know Claremorris, Ballinrobe, and all the little towns of Mayo.'

In his next letter there are two poems enclosed.

#### IN FRANCE

The silence of maternal hills  
 Is round me in my evening dreams,  
 And round me music-making rills,  
 And mingling waves of pastoral streams.

Whatever way I turn, I find  
The paths are old unto me still,  
The hills of home are in my mind,  
And there I wander as I will.

## HAD I A GOLDEN POUND TO SPEND

Had I a golden pound to spend,  
My love should mend and sew no more,  
And I would buy her a little quern  
Easy to turn on the kitchen floor.  
  
And for her windows curtains white,  
With birds in flight and flowers in bloom,  
To face with pride the road to town  
And mellow down her sunlit room.  
  
And with the silver change we 'd prove  
The truth of Love to life's own end,  
With hearts the years could but embolden,  
Had I a golden pound to spend.

The letter in which these were sent talks with a happy confidence. I am not to think he is lonely. There are a few about him who care for the only things that matter as he does. And he has letters from home, from brothers, and sisters, and cousins, and his loving mother. They are all artists in a way ; one collect flowers, one examines into causes and thinks he has discovered the cause of gravity : 'When I am at home we are all happy together.'

I was with the first British troops who landed at Salonika. We spent all last winter fighting the Bulgars in the hills of the Varda and Uskub. . . . I daresay you know the horrors of the retreat. I love Serbia. It is a delightful country even seen, as I have seen it, under the worst conditions of weather, etc. I spent a year in the East going first to the Dardanelles. I was in Egypt, Cyprus, Mitylene, and had a pleasant fortnight in Naples.

His next letter gives some indication of his odd ways of writing.

When I read the proofs of *Songs of Peace* there were several poems I hardly recognised as my own, for I scribble them off in odd moments, and, if I do not give them to some one, they become

part of the dust of the earth and little things stuck on the ends of hedges when the wind has done with them. My MSS. are scattered about two hemispheres, some lost for ever, others wandering in the corners of newspapers, like so many little Abrahams, changing their names as if they had given over an old faith and were set on new endeavours. I lament them in sober moments, and forget them again when some new tune breaks out in my mind.

I wish you would come to Louth. There are charming places about Dundalk and Drogheda, and the people are so beautiful. When I am in Louth I always imagine voices are calling me from one distance to another, and at every turn I half expect to see Cuchullin stride over the hills to meet some new champion of Maeve. You could only be happy in Louth or Meath. . . .

What a pity the birds must suffer as we do! I had a special way of feeding them when I was at home in winter. I used to put potatoes on the garden wall for the crows and under a covering of sacks spread bread and meal for the smaller birds. It was taboo to open the kitchen door, for that would disturb them.

'So A. E. has been telling you of my doings,' he says in another letter, 'but he did not know that the poems which I destroyed were very amateurish; and how sick I was of them, for I had repeated them until they became vapid. I try to keep my poems now by sending them to Lord Dunsany, or home, but out here one has not always the time or the convenience, and, after all, when the pleasure of writing them has passed, what does it matter? I still have hundreds. My next book will be the best of mine.'

'I may be in Ireland for May Day yet.'

But May Day found him still in France, and the longest letter he has written me is dated 31st of May. I fear I was slow in answering his letters. He always wrote at once with a great understanding and forgiveness.

Your letter came yesterday evening like melody from the woods of home, as welcome as rain to the shrivelled lips of June. It was like laughter heard over a low hill. I would have written to thank you for the sweets, only that lately we were unsettled, wandering to and fro between the firing-line and resting billets immediately behind. This letter is antedated by two hours, but before midnight we may be wandering in single and slow file, with the reserve line two or three hundred yards behind the fire trench. We are under an hour's notice. Entering and leaving

the line is most exciting, as we are usually but about thirty yards from the enemy, and you can scarcely understand how bright the nights are made by his rockets. These are in continual ascent and descent from dusk to dawn, making a beautiful crescent from Switzerland to the sea. There are white lights, green, and red, and whiter, bursting into red and changing again, and blue bursting into purple drops and reds fading into green. It is all like the end of a beautiful world. It is only horrible when you remember that every colour is a signal to waiting reinforcements or artillery, and, God help us if we are caught in the open, for then up go a thousand reds, and hundreds of rifles and machine-guns are emptied against us, and all amongst us shells of every calibre are thrown, shouting destruction and death. We can do nothing but fling ourselves into the first shell-hole and wonder as we wait where we will be hit. But why all this?

I am indeed glad to think you are preparing another book of verse. *Will you really allow me to review it?* I don't want money for doing it. The honour would be more worth than money. I reviewed Seunas O'Sullivan's poems a few years ago, and hope I helped him a little to a wider public, though he has not yet the fame he deserves. His very name is a picture to me of lakes and green places, rivers and willows, and wild wings. You give me a picture of a long lane, with many surprises of flowers, a house hidden in trees where there is rest, and beyond that mountains where the days are purple, and then the sea. A. E. sets me thinking of things long forgotten, and Lord Dunsany of gorgeous Eastern tapestry and carpets. Do you get such impressions from the books you love? I met a traveller in Naples who told me that he never read Andrew Marvell but he remembered a dunce's cap and a fishing-rod he had when a boy, and never could trace the train of thought far enough back to discover where the connection lay.

I am writing odd things in a little book whenever I can. Just now I am engaged in a poem about the Lanawn Shee, who, you remember, is really the Irish Muse. One who sees her is doomed to sing. She is very close to you. I am writing it in the traditional style of the 'Silk of the Kine.' Here are the opening verses :

Powdered and perfumed the full bee  
Winged heavily across the clover,  
And where the hills were dim with dew,  
Purple and blue the West looked over

A willow spray dipped in the stream,  
 Moved many a gleam of silver ringing,  
 And by a finny creek a maid  
 Filled all the shade with softest singing.

She told me of Tir n'an Og. . . .

And there, she told me, honey drops  
 Out of the tops of ash and willow,  
 And, in the mellow shadows, Sleep  
 Doth sweetly keep her poppied pillow.

And when the dance is done, the trees  
 Are left to Peace and the brown woodpecker,  
 And on the western slopes of sky  
 The day's blue eye begins to flicker.

She tries many devices to woo a lover, and to secure his pity  
 laments one who loved her for long but one day left her for  
 earth, 'fairer than Usna's youngest son.'

You rode with Kings o'er hills of green,  
 And lovely Queens have served your banquet,  
 Sweet wines from berries bruised they brought,  
 And shyly sought the lips that drank it.

If I do not tire of it you will read it all some day (D.V.). I  
 enclose a little thing written on Ascension Thursday. It is  
 time I remembered you would be weary of this letter and will  
 close with regret.

#### ASCENSION THURSDAY, 1917

Lord, Thou hast left Thy footprints in the rocks,  
 That we may know the way to follow Thee,  
 But there are wide lands opened out between  
 Thy Olivet and my Gethsemane.

And oftentimes I make the night afraid,  
 Crying for lost hands when the dark is deep,  
 And strive to reach the sheltering of Thy love  
 Where Thou art herd among Thy folded sheep.

Thou wilt not ever thus, O Lord, allow  
 My feet to wander when the sun is set,  
 But through the darkness, let me still behold  
 The stony bye-ways up to Olivet.

19.6.17.

This is my birthday. I am spending it in a little red town in an orchard. There is a lovely valley just below me, and a river that goes gobbling down the fields, like turkeys coming home in Ireland. It is an idle little vagrant that does no work for miles and miles except to turn one mill-wheel for a dusty old man who has five sons fighting for France. I was down here earlier in the spring, when all the valley wore its confirmation dress, and was glad to return again in the sober moments of June. Although I have a conventional residence I sleep out in the orchard, and every morning a cuckoo comes to a tree quite close, and calls out his name with a clear voice above the rest of the morning's song, like a tender stop heard above the lower keys in a beautiful organ.

I am glad to hear the experience of your boy in Macedonia. I had a rather narrow escape above Lake Doiran in the winter of 1915. Ten of us went out to rescue a few sheep which we had discovered on a mountain top, and we were attacked by a Bulgar force. We sought the cover of rocks in a deep ravine, and we were able to keep the attackers off, although we could not return until help arrived. We secured three sheep, after which we named the battle. I wrote the song of it for the *Sunday Chronicle* in Manchester last year.

I hope — will be duly rewarded for his coolness and bravery, for, after all, is not every honour won by Irishmen on the battle-fields of the world Ireland's honour, and does it not tend to the glory and delight of her posterity ?

You are in Meath now, I suppose. If you go to Tara, go to Rath-na-Ri and look all around you from the hills of Drumcondrath in the north to the plains of Enfield in the south, where Allan Bog begins, and remember me to every hill and wood and ruin, for my heart is there. If it is a clear day you will see Slane Hill blue and distant. Say I will come back again surely, and maybe you will hear pipes in the grass or a fairy horn and the hounds of Finn—I have heard them often from Tara.

Be sure to remember me to Lord Fingall if he is at home.

I am greatly afraid *Lord Edward* will never reach me. . . .

My next book is due in October. Did you ever know I wrote a play ? It is a one-act thing called *A Crock of Gold*, and is about a man who went to dig for gold which another man dreamt about. I showed it to many in London and Dublin, and they liked it. . . . I will show you the play when I come to see you.

About the mine—it made a greater explosion in the newspapers than on Hill 60, but was beautiful all the same.

It is growing dusk now: it is ‘the owls’ light,’ and I must draw to a close.

With this letter came three poems.

## I

### THE FIND

I took a reed and blew a tune  
And sweet it was and very clear,  
To be about a little thing  
That only few held dear.

Three times the Cuckoo named himself  
And nothing heard him on the hill,  
Where I was piping like an elf;  
The green was very still.

’Twas all about a little thing,  
I made a mystery of sound,  
I found it in a fairy ring  
Upon a fairy mound.

## II

### STANLEY HILL

In Stanley Hill the bees are loud,  
And loud a river wild,  
And there, as wayward as a cloud,  
I was a little child.

I knew not how mistrustful heart  
Could lure with hidden wile,  
And wound us in a fateful part  
With dark and sudden guile.

And yet for all I ’ve known and seen  
Of Youth and Truth reviled,  
On Stanley Hill the grass is green  
And I am still a child.

## III

## THE OLD GODS

I thought the old gods still in Greece  
 Making the little fates of man,  
 So in a secret place of Peace  
 I prayed as but a poet can :

And all my prayer went crying faint  
 Around Parnassus' cloudy height,  
 And found no ear for my complaint,  
 And back unanswered came at night.

Ah, foolish that I was to heed  
 The voice of folly, or presume  
 To find the old gods in my need,  
 So far from A. E.'s little room.

The last of these letters is dated July 20th. It is poignant, as Francis Ledwidge's name is now a poignancy and a fierce indignation that such as he should be killed, and after nearly three years of service. Presently out of his memory will come nothing but sweetness, a bruised sweetness if you will, because he has gone to join the great company, taking with him so much of his lovely message for the world and especially for his own country.

We have just returned from the line after an unusually long time. It was very exciting this time, as we had to contend with gas, lachrymatory shells, and other devices new and horrible. It will be worse soon. The camp we are in at present might be in Tir-n'an-Og, it is pitched amid such splendours. There is barley and rye just entering harvest days of gold, and meadow-sweet rippling, and where a little inn named 'In den Neerloop' holds its gable up to the swallows, blue-bells and goldilocks swing their splendid censers. There is a wood hard by where hips glisten like little sparks, and just at the edge of it mealey (?) leaves sway like green fire. I will hunt for a secret place in that wood to read *Lord Edward*. I anticipate beautiful moments.

I daresay you have left Meath and are back again in the brown wides of Connaught. I would give £100 for two days in Ireland

with nothing to do but ramble on from one delight to another. I am entitled to a leave now, but I'm afraid there are many before my name in the list. . . . Special leaves are granted, and I have to finish a book for the autumn. But, more particularly, I want to see again my wonderful mother, and to walk by the Boyne to Crewbawn and up through the brown and grey rocks of Crocknaharna. You have no idea of how I suffer with this longing for the swish of the reeds at Slane and the voices I used to hear coming over the low hills of Currabwee. Say a prayer that I may get this leave, and give as a condition my punctual return and sojourn till the war is over. It is midnight now and the glowworms are out. It is quiet in camp, but the far night is loud with our own guns bombarding the positions we must soon fight for.

I hope your boy in Macedonia is doing well and that your other boy is still in Ireland.

One is quite sure that the blameless soul of Francis Ledwidge, before it sped on its way to its ultimate Source and Goal, flew over the fields of Meath and hovered a while near those scenes and friends for whom he had so tender and faithful an attachment.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### THE SPRING

THERE is very little more to tell. Time was when we had imagined the Peace and the great rejoicings. It had been hard enough during the strenuous years of the War to be buried in Mayo. Whatever immunity it gave us we had not asked for nor desired. But we had said to each other early in the War : ‘We must be in Dublin for the Peace.’

But alas, the War dragged endlessly. Over and over again there was the mirage of peace only to be blotted out by the heart-breaking continuance of the War. And, after a time, it came to us that, to be sure, there would be no rejoicing for the Peace when it came. We had suffered too much for that. We might emerge from under the scourges, but our backs would be still bloody. Ah, no, there would be no rejoicing ; and still the Peace receded ever further, till it seemed as though it would be as Lord Killanin, in a mood of despair, had predicted.

‘There will be left two men, one dying, the other dead ; and the dying man will say, “I have won the war.” And that will be the end of it.’

What a subject for Lord Dunsany. The two—one dead, one dying, on an empty and crimsoned world !

In September 1917 our elder boy was in Egypt with Allenby’s army advancing through the desert. He was of the army that captured Jerusalem, and of that I am very proud. Our younger was snatched away from Cork with his battalion of the Dublins, in the unexplained scare of November 1917, when, according to Lord Wimborne’s excellent phrase, ‘not a dog barked,’ and was deposited

on the coast of Wales where, like Columcille, he ‘ turned a grey eye towards Erin.’ Fortunately, a little earlier, he had used a period of ‘ resting’ after inoculation to join us for a week-end in Dublin, which we enjoyed to the full, spending our Sunday afternoon and evening at Kilteragh with Sir Horace Plunkett. Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Shaw were among the guests, greatly to the joy of the young Dublin Fusilier, who is nothing if not democratic and has a real gift for politics as well as for soldiering. The picture of the very young soldier arguing vigorously with Mr. Shaw, his face lifted towards the philosopher, who was no less vigorous, so that his long beard waved in the wind of argument, remains with me, the two heads standing out against the panelled walls of the room.

Mr. Shaw had given me a very Shavian and pretendedly sharp answer a little while earlier when I had gone begging to him for some one.

That Sunday he came and sat down on a stool near me in the verandah at Kilteragh.

‘ I ’m afraid I wrote you a very rude letter,’ said he.

‘ It is a most valuable autograph,’ said I, ‘ so characteristic.’

During our infrequent visits to Dublin—an Irish Resident Magistrate has but thirty-six days of holiday in the year—we plunge into life, we see all manner of interesting people, we pick up threads, we taste what would be ours if we were not Mayo’s, we live furiously, and then back again into the wilderness for another four or five months. We visited theatres, we tea’d with the Convention staff, we met Patrick Butler, home with the Salonika despatches, we saw dear A. E., we had a glimpse of Lord MacDonnell, and a long afternoon with Lord Ashbourne just come from France. We spent our second week-end at Gorey, with Lady Esmonde; Sir Thomas was unfortunately held up in London by a chill; and we saw our school-girl daughter, who might have been with us but for the loneliness of life in Mayo.

We went back to the West buoyed up with the hope of having our Dublin Fusilier for another week-end. He had got leave, and he thought it worth while to make the long journey from Cork to be with us for forty-eight hours. Alas, he never came. It was almost as bad as the Rebellion. Three chill days went by before word came to say leave was stopped; and nearly a week later a letter from that drear sea-coast in Wales. And, after all, 'not a dog barked.'

The winter has run out incredibly fast, the lonely winter to which we had looked forward with dread. The life in which nothing happens goes the fastest, because it has no landmarks. It was even a very happy winter, with messages coming constantly from the precious part of us out in the world. And the older one grows the faster life gallops, like the Irish coachman who keeps the gallant spurt for the avenue up to the house and the end of the journey. I worked hard and wrote many letters, and I went with the R.M. to his courts and lunched with the priests, and every evening I went down to the kitchen and read a book to my two faithful servants and friends for an hour or so. It was an hour they and I enjoyed, for they too having followed us into exile, were most truly of the alleviations. Also I had long country walks with the dogs—two Boche dogs, *i.e.* Poms. and an Irishman. On Sunday evenings the kind parson came and played Beethoven to us, and so the winter ran out.

It had its sadnesses. The friend of my girlhood, Dora Sigerson (Mrs. Shorter), died at Epiphany Tide; but then the War has robbed death of so many of his terrors. We have grown used to him, because so many of the young have plucked him by the beard and gone gaily with him that one cannot be afraid.

One can hardly believe that the winter is over and the spring come—a spring which stood at our door at the Feast of Candlemas offering primroses instead of snowdrops. Last night at midnight there was a tossing and a chattering of returning birds; and the bare earth

trembles as it were with susurri of love-making birds, while from the lake come the queer chuckles and gurgles of the moor-fowl, although the wind is in the east. Spring has come in such a guise that it is impossible not to believe in her. She may prove a jade and snow us under in April as she did last year—but for once I believe in her and her delicate message of hope. For though I shall not see it my children's children may see it that the world will have passed from under the shadow into such a spring light as was never dreamt of, and it will have been bought for us by the sacrifice and the suffering of the dark years.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### IN WHICH THE STORY IS TAKEN UP AGAIN

I HAD put away the book out of my hand, written ‘Finis,’ and added the date ‘April 1st, 1918’ before the events happened to which these Western years were perhaps leading up.

Having finished the book and sent the typescript to Messrs. Constable, we went up to Dublin, where we were joined by the school-girl whom we had had to do without that winter because Mayo was intolerably lonely for a young thing with a perpetually-writing mother. We saw the very last of the Convention, for we were at Kilteragh on the first Sunday of April when Sir Horace and an army of Secretaries were busy on the report. Lord Brassey was there talking Irish politics and very keen for information from the R.M., and outside the official business there was much talk of conscription, and of the War, which was almost at its blackest hour. Sir Horace was very weary and talked with closed eyes. I think even his optimism had failed him for the moment.

I should like to say with humility that about that time I hope, I believe, I was instrumental in accomplishing a great thing. Little by little during the years of the War there had crept back into the newspapers—presumably because good people had so many things to think about—the adoption advertisements which, in too many instances, were just cloaks for the baby-farmer. I, with the infinite leisureliness of Mayo about me, had time to read the columns of my English papers where these advertisements appeared, sometimes two, sometimes four, sometimes six a day, offering children of all

ages, even up to eleven, for ‘adoption,’ with the corresponding advertisements of those willing to ‘adopt.’ Of course there were some cases of genuine adoption, which did not concern me. When there was ‘No Premium’ one might be sure. Now and again there was a cry. Once it was for a three weeks’ old baby—‘Love and tenderness implored.’ There cried the mother. One wondered over the story behind such a cry. But the others, the baby-farming ones—the poor little slaves of eight and nine and upwards who were to be handed over to some one, no questions asked,—the precious little children, who were to change hands sometimes, it was proved, as often as eight times, getting to lower and lower depths of misery till merciful death came: these do not bear thinking on.

When I first noticed the advertisements I thought some one with a better right to intervene than I would do it; but no one did, and as the scandal became more flagrant I wrote an article in the *Star*, for which I had been writing constantly during the winter and spring. I followed up the article by a second telling the story of a child-slave I once came upon in a boarding-house kept by shady English people on the French coast. I made one or two efforts to bring into the matter those who had more right to speak than I, but without success. Then the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children took the matter up and the advertisements disappeared from the respectable papers, where, doubtless, they had appeared by inadvertence of somebody. No one seemed to have noticed the advertisements but myself. For so far as I was instrumental in this good work I am very proud and grateful. I would add a word of general advice. If the War has an inner meaning it must be that we are to be taught by losing our children to save our children. May not every young martyr of the War have bought with his blood ten thousand lives? When we begin setting our house in order, let the order be—‘Shoot the baby-farmer at sight!’

Those *Star* articles brought me a great number of readers and a certain accession to my letter-bag. If I write any more Reminiscences—and people seem to like them very much indeed—I shall certainly have an article on Star-Shells. They are usually shells, as, for instance, those from the gentleman who abuses my religion and pities its dupes through four pages, and ends up with ‘Sorry! yours, etc.’ . . .

I take leave to doubt that ‘Sorry.’ There is another gentleman who roundly curses what he calls my ‘elaborate camouflage of Sinn Fein.’ There is a parson who, beginning with his love of Ireland, works himself up to a fine ironic passion at the end over some far-away happenings of the Land League days, asking caustically how I can explain away the murder of women as though it were my trade. Then there are the much pleasanter people. There is the altogether delightful sergeant from the County of Mayo who writes to me from an English camp enclosing poems written by his brother, ‘a young lad, as he follows the plough.’ There is the ex-R.I.C. man who has a reminiscence of Anna Parnell in the Land League days, sprinting across fields and bogs to arrive at an eviction before the bailiffs. ‘It is recorded in the newspapers of that date that Miss A. Parnell lept from a ten-foot wall into the arms of a man that was in the dyke below. Now, I am that man.’

But these and many other whimsies must wait for another book, if there is to be another book.

The day after our visit to Sir Horace we had been spending a delightful few hours with our friends, Judge and Mrs. Ross, now Sir John and Lady Ross, at their house, Oatlands, Stillorgan, where the delicious garden was out in all its spring beauty. We came back very happily to our hotel and found awaiting us a telegram from our younger boy saying that he was ‘going out’ to France—in that black hour—and on his way for four days’ embarkation leave.

He came the next morning about 6.30. I had been lying awake from dawn, when some early bird had gone

down the street singing ‘The Soldiers’ Song,’ with élan. There were very few nights at that hotel in which you did not hear ‘The Soldiers’ Song’—that excellent marching song of the Sinn Feiners, written and composed, I am told, by a plumber and a carpenter. At last I heard his car draw up at the door, and presently his dear young presence was in the dusky room.

Every minute of those four days seemed to run out visibly and audibly. Always there were the hours, growing fewer and fewer, in which we should have him, before he should be plunged into the maelstrom. Some one I met in the street to whom I told that he was going to France, said ‘My God !’ and turned away. It was such a black hour, and one was always meeting some one whose son was missing or worse since the dreadful 21st of March. We gave him a good time. All the soldier-boys we were interested in were gone or going. The girl was going to her first dance. There were no dancing men to be had. A telegram to the Curragh brought a reply ‘Gone Overseas.’

What a lonely sound it had, like Julian Grenfell’s ‘We sail at dawn.’ All the profound melancholy of the dusk of morning, the cold and creeping sea, the parting, the death, were in those four words. The ‘Gone Overseas’ struck one cold to the heart at that moment.

We saw him off from Kingstown on the evening of April 12th. He had with him a young officer, a couple of years older than himself, who had rung me up earlier in the day.

‘Is that Mrs. Hinkson ? You are not to worry about Pat. I will take care of him.’

They parted very soon after landing in France, and I don’t think they have met since, but I pray that all may be well with that golden-haired, pretty boy who was to take care of Pat for me.

Pat had dined the previous evening with a party of soldiers, and had come back to the hotel, his eyes shining, to impart to us the quips and cranks. Pat is a voluminous talker, and has thought before he talks. Some one who

met his brother in Palestine said that he talked even more. But Pat's talk is on high politics, Democracy and the rights of man ; he has sat at A. E.'s feet and reads *The National Being* in the trenches ; and A. E. is proud of his small disciple and recalls that Pat reminds him of the most intellectual soldier he ever met, whose name I cannot recall. What matter ! Although he is a general he is doubtless a quite obscure one.

But when Pat is rowdy he is rowdy, and he thoroughly enjoyed the humours of the soldier-dinner and the irresponsible gaiety of the captain whose guest he was, who came into the hotel next day and danced the Fox-Trot round the drawing-room. That blithe spirit came to the boat to wish Pat God-speed, and jested, and we all jested almost to the end.<sup>1</sup> The mother of a dead soldier at the hotel had sent me a message by my girl, 'Tell her I trust her not to shed a tear.' I kept trust.

We went down in a carriage full of young soldiers going out. There were parties at every carriage door seeing them off if not accompanying them to the boat. One remembers the irresponsible chaff. 'I shall be thinking of you floating round the Round Room of the Mansion House on the 26th,' said a boy with a girlish face to a young lady he was parting from. He was in the Flying Corps. One wonders how he fared.

It was all gay chatter and irresponsibility till the train left Westland Row, but as soon as the train had started there was silence. The serious partings were to come.

One remembers little things. The soldiers on the lower deck were shouting and singing and the cheerful captain said, 'Those fellows will let the Untersees know they are coming.' It rained and the darkness came on, and presently the boat began to slide away from the pier. We watched till we could see it no more, and then we turned away and went back to Dublin.

On our return journey we had a little adventure which, if one put it into a novel, would set the reviewers to talking about 'the long arm of coincidence.' We got into

<sup>1</sup> He died of wounds just when the War was over.

a carriage in which were already two wounded soldiers—one an R.A.M.C. man wounded in the knee, the other, a boy with a most beautiful face, broken from head to foot. They were out from Dublin Castle Hospital for the afternoon.

We asked about the wounded boy, and were told that he had had eleven operations, and was going on to another. He was as gay as a lark over it, poor brave thing. And so we fell into conversation. The R.A.M.C. man, with a very Irish name, it appeared had been in Salonika. We asked him if he had ever come across our elder boy. He roared with laughter as he said : ‘ I should jolly well think I have. I went out with him on the old *Caledonia*. He was fearfully sick.’ Then he indicated the other boy : ‘ And this fellow was guarding us in a destroyer,’ he said.

Dublin was excited at that time over conscription. As we walked through the streets one night it was very like the time just before Easter Week, 1916. The streets were crowded with people, and men stood in groups talking. We went down through ‘ the open wound of Dublin ’ as some foreign journalist called Sackville Street, to the Gresham Hotel to see Lord Ashbourne, and back again to Maple’s Hotel in Kildare Street, and everywhere the feeling was sinister, and people were asking each other : ‘ Will they resist ? ’

Nearly every day while Pat was with us we went across to Plunkett House for the disciple to sit at A. E.’s feet. I have no record of the conversation, but I remember that one day A. E. discussed the characters of Larkin and James Connolly. Rather to my surprise his personal liking was for Larkin. He said he had a warm, glowing personality, while he seemed to find Connolly cold. I had described Larkin as a man running with a torch. He said that was a very just description, that he went from place to place sowing the fiery seed, and when it was sown he was done with that place and went on to another.

He talked about conscription, and said that if the

country accepted it we should be giving away our whole claim to be a separate nation. And in the next generation after conscription the people would have become English, and that would be the end of the centuries of living and burning desire for and insistence upon a separate nationality.

When we bought a paper in the street the R.M. always asked the newsboy what his politics were. The Dublin newsboys eye you sharply before offering you a paper. They can usually size up the customer who will ask for the *Evening Mail* (Conservative), the *Evening Telegraph* (Party), or *The Evening Herald* (Free Lance). This special newsboy eyed the R.M. and apparently could not place him for all his experience, for he said cautiously : 'I 'm whatever gets me my tay.'

On the Sunday the R.M. and I went to Maynooth. I had never seen the great ecclesiastical college before. We were the guests of Dr. D'Alton, the Professor of Classics and author of the brilliant monograph on Horace to which I have referred earlier. We lunched in company with Dr. Walter M'Donald, Prefect of the Dunboyne Establishment, and three other professors. But first we saw the magnificent College Chapel and the various precious possessions, including the vestments given by the Empress Elizabeth of Austria, when she hunted with the Kildares and visited Maynooth. One of her gifts was a silver statue of St. George, so the significance of St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, had not penetrated her mind.

The students were standing about the quad in groups, their long black cassocks lifting in the cold bright wind with an air of flight. The college was breaking up next day because of the conscription ; at that time ecclesiastical students were not exempted.

After lunch we sat in a delightful college room, and told stories over our coffee and liqueur and talked of many things. It might have been Oxford or Cambridge, only I make bold to say the talk would have been less lively at the old universities. Here there was no trace

of donnishness, and the clerics poked fun at each other and told stories against each other as we had always known it with priests, especially community priests, who seem to remain light-hearted schoolboys to the end. An old-fashioned courtesy and gentle manners, with a youthful gaiety and the culture of reading and thinking, make the memory of those hours a delightful one.

The next day we returned to Mayo, bringing with us the daughter who had decided that her place was with us since Pat had gone to France. A day or two later we were joined by a young Connaught Ranger, who had been gassed on the 21st March. This boy, Malachy, had been at Sandhurst with Pat, and had a queer tender admiration for him. He used to tell how at Sandhurst Pat had confuted some anti-Irish Irishmen. ‘ You see, Pat knows Irish history backward, and he wiped the floor with them,’ he used to say. It is surprising the number of people, young and old, whom Pat has contrived to ‘ keep wise on things Irish ’ as his friend, the M.O. out in France, writes to me, adding that he has fallen asleep to Pat’s chanting of Irish poetry.

Now that Pat is with his 1st Dublins, in the great 29th Division, I recall with a sense of comfort Malachy’s assurance, ‘ As soon as Pat gets to the regiment there ’ll be half a dozen of the men banded together to see that he comes to no harm.’ I hope it is true. It is certainly comforting.

These are of the sayings that Pat would call ‘ priceless ’ —yet would tolerate in his mother.

## CHAPTER XXXV

### THE COMING OF THE SOLDIERS

ON the afternoon of the 22nd of April, after we had seen off a dear visitor who had been with us for a week, Malachy, Pam, and I went for a walk. It was the very moment of the year. You could scarce see the grass for primroses : the beeches were out in their first wonderful pale-green silk, with here and there a copper beech : the trees along the lakeside and the river were things of incredible beauty.

Suddenly through the shimmer of leaves and sun we saw an incredible sight. It was no less than *Three Tommies sitting arow upon Old Lambert's Tomb*. It sounds like the heading of a chapter of a Stevenson romance.

At first we thought the dapple of light and shade had deceived us, but, creeping carefully upon the Mount from another direction, we were assured that the incredible was true.

Now it must be remembered that we had been feeling bitterly our alienation from the War, that at the great moment in the world's history we should be banished to the wilderness from which our only touch with the suffering, struggling world was by letter. Pam had envied even those who were under air-raids. Anything, anything, except the immunity (in a sense) which had been forced upon us.

Climbing the Mount to convince ourselves that these were not indeed apparitions, we became aware of other Tommies in the road carrying water. Still we refused to believe that the thing was anything but mirage. The

servants said there were a few soldiers searching for a deserter whose clothes had been found in the Tomb. That seemed hardly credible, though as yet there was a bare sprinkling of soldiers.

One awoke next morning, for the second time in Mayo, to a silence that could be felt. It was the Workless Day, a quiet hint of what would happen in case of conscription being enforced. Lying awake in the beautiful morning, there was not a sound save the songs of birds. 'Ah,' I said to myself, 'they have moved on. It was only a halt.' I rose up with a disappointed feeling that we had gone back to our solitude. I was at my prayers in the Oratory when the bugle rang out.

No one could blame them for a late morning. The great body of the troops had happened upon the Silent Day. They had reached Tuam on their way to Claremorris when the hands of the clock stood at midnight. Immediately the train stopped. The engine-driver and his mate stepped off the engine. 'What is the meaning of this?' asked the aghast Commanding-Officer. 'Very sorry to inconvenience you,' was the reply, 'but we can't go on till twelve o'clock to-night. We have our orders.'

Threats and cajolings were all in vain. The protagonist roared with laughter when he told us. 'I had threatened to shoot them if they didn't take us on,' he said, 'and I might have had to do it, only my ammunition wagon went on fire. In the confusion the two gentlemen disappeared quietly into the night.'

There were the poor soldiers at the gates of the ancient town of Tuam, which boasts of two cathedrals, a Catholic archbishop, and a Protestant bishop, with a Diocesan College, convents, etc. Tuam was as dead as all the rest on the Silent Day, the shops all closed, the inhabitants, many of them, gone away, some of those left unfriendly to the soldiers. There was breakfast at the hotel, the convent, and at the houses of private citizens for as many as possible officers and men, but on the whole it must have been short rations for men and

horses ; and it was midnight again before the great body of them got under weigh for Claremorris.

At least April had put on her loveliest garb for them. There was a burst of hot weather just then. After all the hardships the soldiers must have felt that they had dropped into Paradise. We were very much invaded by soldiers in those early days, and the R.M. was always arriving in the drawing-room with the information that there were twenty Tommies, at least, bathing in front of the hall door, at which a blushing young subaltern or two or three would fly out to disperse them.

That first day we spent mainly in staring at the camp, quite unabashed rustics gawking at the show. Malachy was very amiable about it, although he said it was awkward for a soldier to be standing about staring at other soldiers, and they didn't really interest him. He only hoped that if any recruits were got they would go to the Rangers. If he had not been a cynic philosopher he would have gone clean off his head on hearing that the K.O.S.B.'s had got six recruits.

The new-comers were very uncertain of the atmosphere they had walked into. They had been told that Claremorris was a hotbed of Sinn Fein. One young officer, who was mess secretary to his battery, came and talked to Malachy, asking him if there was danger. ‘Lots,’ said Malachy ; ‘they’ve all got rifles and they may pot at you from behind any wall or hedge.’ ‘Good Heavens !’ said the young officer, who was a newly married man—‘I wish I was back in Scotland !’

However, Claremorris is nothing if not business-like. When we went to look for our provisions that day, Claremorris afforded us nothing more than a small tin of treacle. We saw the young officer buying onions in a shop, having first borrowed the rifle of an adjacent Tommy.

Of course they did come into an atmosphere laden with distrust and apprehension of them. Mayo, although she has a good many sons in the War, had, for a long time, been unacquaint with the spectacle of soldiers.

Like ourselves, she had only touched the wounds of war. Through some stupidity or bungling economy the barracks of the Rangers were rotting in the towns, the grass growing tall between the cobbles of the barrack-squares. These were not Irish soldiers, but aliens of whom the people knew nothing. They came to enforce conscription, or the people thought they did. It was a tragic hour, heavy with menace. If you can imagine the feeling of Belgium when the Germans marched in you have the feeling with which the Connaught peasants looked upon the soldiers, except, that from end to end of Belgium you would hardly find a peasant so unsophisticated as these. Indeed one did not need to be a peasant to look upon the soldiers with foreboding. One just hoped and prayed that they were come, not to enforce conscription, but in case of a German landing.<sup>1</sup> One said the reassuring thing over and over to every peasant one met in those days, with a heart torn in two between the people and the soldiers.

One had not to wait long to be assured of the personal good feeling and friendliness of the soldiers. On the Sunday morning our Father Michael referred at early Mass to the presence of the camp. ‘Be civil to the soldiers,’ he said, ‘they are men like yourselves.’

At the later Mass there were some eighty soldiers who came to the accompaniment of the pipes. They were pious as only soldier men can be. The rapt and respectful interest with which they listened to Father Michael’s sermon could not fail to be very agreeable to him. They sang the Benediction hymns with devout fervour, the harmonious voices—they were evidently accustomed to congregational singing—effectually drowning the very scratch choir.

The two little soldier communicants who have knelt Sunday after Sunday at the altar-rails, among the peasants, must have done a good deal towards reconciliation.

<sup>1</sup> We were told later that they came hastily, because vessels laden with ammunition had left German ports for our coast.

When the soldiers were formed up outside the church the boys of the congregation, as though mechanically, formed up opposite to them, imitating their movements.

But, at first, the atmosphere was heavy in the beautiful spring weather. One of the first things we heard was that Peter Walsh, at the bridge over against the artillery-field, had sent his young niece who house-kept for him home "to her own people. I am not sure it was an unwise precaution, but the soldiers did not like it.

That first day, while Malachy 'stuffed' the young officer, an immensely tall, boyish-looking officer, with an odd, side-long gait, passed us by. The young officer said : 'That is the C.O., Lord Linlithgow.'

The next afternoon when I was all alone Lord Linlithgow came to call, and I had to rescue him from the yapping pack of dogs with whom he was presently to be on such terms of friendship. Then the rest of the family came in, and Malachy was telling the C.O. of a lively scrap overseas. Malachy talks with the slowest, most deliberate speech, and the C.O. was listening, with his profound interest in human nature, which we were to know more about presently, looking beyond the story to Malachy.

'One evening a fellow at the Mess got a letter, and it was in it that the 11th Dublins had been hooted going into Aldershot. When he had read it he sprang to his feet and on to the table, and began to read it aloud, and then, waving it over his head, he shouted to the other fellows that he was going out to tell the men. It was an awful situation, for there were two thousand of our men outside, and you only just had to set them going, and God knows what would have happened. They'd have been into the nearest English regiment. The colonel called for order ; he is an Englishman, and a very nice man, but they just didn't take any notice of him. And the major called for order, but no one could hear anything for the noise and the confusion ; and so off the fellows rushed to tell the men that the 11th Dublins were hooted going into Aldershot. The Lord knows

what would have happened only that by the Mercy of Heaven, assisted by the drink and a tent-rope that tripped him up, the fellow who got the letter was down in a heap and all the others a-top of him, and by the time they were done swearing at each other, they 'd forgotten what they were out for.'

And again :

'When our fellows go over the top they 'll leave nothing alive that comes in their way. If a hen was to cross their path a fellow would stoop down and wring her neck and throw her to one side, not out of any ill will to the hen, but just because they were out to kill.'

I had been learning something already of what '*The Regiment*' means, much more than anything else, I think, to the soldiers. I was to know more of it as soldiers of the different regiments met in our drawing-room. The cold nod, the glacial stare, which was all they had for each other, were most amusing to the on-looker.

The fairy-mushroom forest of tents had hardly sprung up before the soldiers began to come in to see us. We were the nearest house to the camp, which was in our back-garden, so to speak, and practically the only house for their entertainment within seven or eight miles. We began to discover how exceedingly gentle some of these soldiers could be. I think I have hardly ever known civilians to be so curiously gentle.

The Royal Scots, of whom Lord Linlithgow was colonel, gave a concert in the Town Hall a week or ten days after their arrival. I went with misgiving and some unhappiness as to what the people might think of me, because, of course, my heart is always with my own people. There was a very small audience of the townspeople in the gallery at the back. I think they were mostly young girls and children. All went well, save for the strange tragic atmosphere which yellowed the lights to me and spoilt the music and songs, till, just as the band was preparing for 'God Save the King,' the quavering young voices in the gallery set up 'The Soldiers'

Song.' There was something pathetic about it to my ear. It was their little protest of their own loyalty. The soldiers looked at us. 'What is it?' 'It is the Sinn Fein song,' we answered. Then the band broke out into 'God Save the King,' and the thin young voices were lost.

The day following that, Lord Linlithgow, who had not been well, came to sleep under our roof, and remained with us for some ten weeks. We had seen him once since he called on us loping along by the hedgerows, watching the ways of birds, in which he was almost as much interested as the ways of men and women. Those were ten delightful weeks, to which he brought gaiety, sympathy, wit, and understanding. His French and Irish blood gave him vivacity and quickwittedness; to use a Scottish phrase, which I had heard Lady Wemyss use of herself, he was 'quick in the uptak,' beyond most people I have known.

I have already counted it as a blessing that the two responsible for the military in our part of the world were as wise and as understanding as he and the Brigadier-General, Lord Shaftesbury, both possessing Irish blood and with quick sympathy. I suppose the Scottish blood counted for a certain prudence in Lord Linlithgow. Even before he had made the acquaintance of the R.M. he had called on the P.P. and his curates and had drunk a glass of wine with them.

I should have to be much further away from Lord Linlithgow and those days than I am ever likely to be to do anything like justice to his character. He had delightful whimsies, behind which there was always real good sense and goodness of heart.

One of the very first days—perhaps it was the first—he went into a hotel in Claremorris to see some one or other, and while he went upstairs he deposited his great-coat and Glengarry in the coffee-room. When he returned he found an unfriendly, somewhat bibulous person reclining on his belongings with a mocking eye, which said that he did not intend to give them up, as

a more responsible companion was endeavouring to persuade him to. His bowler hat stood on the table. Lord Linlithgow put it on and remarked quietly : ‘ I ’ll get into trouble if I go out wearing this hat, but it is nothing to the trouble you ’ll get into if you go out wearing my cap.’

The man roared with laughter, and immediately rendered up the garments.

The first field day was or might have been a very alarming occasion to the country people, if Lord Linlithgow had not sent an officer to the adjoining cottagers to tell the people they need not be afraid. He himself met with a very hostile reception from an old woman who came out of her cabin as he rode down a boreen. ‘ What are you here for ? ’ she asked, shaking her fist at him.

‘ Well,’ he said gaily, ‘ to tell you the truth, I came to ask you for a kiss, but as you are so disagreeable about it, I suppose I ’d better be going.’

If she did not laugh she was no Irishwoman.

He was a very delightful talker. Some whimsey he would take and expand, adding to, adorning and changing it as he went. When he started a whimsical idea it was like what A. E. said of James Stephens with his characters, that he was like a puppy having a wild game with a doll, that he rolled over it and shook it and tore it to pieces with a most exquisite enjoyment. He is one of the most whimsical talkers I have ever met.

Intimacy grew rapidly. I recall him, on his first visit, taking photographs of his children out of his pockets to show them to us, looking just a big boy, with a dark head not unlike the birds he loved. He showed us the twins and his ‘ eldest unmarried daughter ’ aged five, but the picture of the baby he could not find, and he looked very rueful about it. ‘ Bad business,’ he said, ‘ I can’t find the baby.’

They must be delightful children. We heard many good stories of the twins. One particularly affected me. I had sent them a little book of manners for

children, written by myself and illustrated by that charming artist, Charles Robinson. It is called *A Little Book of Courtesies*. Lady Linlithgow had been reading it aloud to the twins when the elder twin (they are six years old) suddenly turned a deep red, and said in a tone of conscience-stricken offence—‘I think it is a very strange thing for a book like that to be sent to you by a lady who does not know you.’ No one knew what shaft had gone home, or why.

Lord Linlithgow had an immense interest in the simple people round about us while having little appetite for the ordinary social round. After his day’s official work was done, he used to ‘strafe’ a fallen tree in front of the house, and in the intervals, and during the day as he came and went, he used to talk to Peter Walsh who was mending the roof. Peter had known him first when he was bird’s-nesting and had made play with him, thinking him a very simple, big boy to be interested in such a simple thing. I used to hear the conversations from my room where I was working.

‘Peter, did you see me “strafe” that tree?’

‘I did, your Lordship.’

‘What did you think of it?’

‘Indeed, I never thought gentlemen like your Lordship did any work at all.’

That was Peter’s laugh. Generally the laugh was the other way, a whimsical, tender laugh that could offend no one.

Peter, by this time, had made great friends with the Artillery, who were our first friends among the soldiers and came and went constantly. There were tennis-parties every afternoon, and in the long, light evenings there was tennis and bridge. There were evenings when all the officers of the battery were in the house or on the tennis-lawn. The officers of all the regiments came and went as they would. When we were out, as when we were in, the doors stood open, and occasionally we came in to find strangers on the tennis-lawn. We were very glad to do so much or so little for the soldiers.

Captain Spence of the Artillery was the first officer we spoke to, advising him that first day about the water for the troops. He remains one of our best friends, being a good Irishman as well as a good Scotsman and the best of men and gentlemen. He had listened to Sir Horace Plunkett's exposition of the Irish question when they were fellow-travellers across the Atlantic. He has a natural affinity for and sympathy with the Irish, and he paid me the sweetest compliment I ever received when he wrote to the R.M. after he had left us : 'I am writing to say *au revoir* to Mrs. Hinkson, for she truly is the Ireland I love and mean to return to.' When he rode to Leenane in Connemara on a military mission, the people came out and looked at him and said with a sorrowful dignity, 'Why are you here ? You are not welcome to us ?' I think he felt that.

One day we met him and Captain Blake, his next in command, giving old Mullahy, the herd on the estate, his first motor drive : and it was very delightful to see the little, old, simple peasant sitting up between the two smart officers.

Peter liked the Artillery very much. He likes to recall them when we meet and talk on the road. 'They were very educated men,' he says, and when we convey Lord Linlithgow's latest message : 'My duty to Peter Walsh !' he says : 'See that now ! and the first time I laid eyes on him I thought him just a simple boy stravaigin' round the hedges after birds' eggs as many a time I did myself. I was terrible ashamed of my ignorant ways when I found out who he was. "Sure, my Lord," said I, "I didn't know who you were at all." "Never mind that, Peter," said he, looking at me with his head on one side, "you were very kind to me about the birds' nests."'

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### SOLDIER-TALK

WHEN we heard that Lord Shaftesbury was the Brigadier-General we were greatly interested, I especially because of my devotion to the Wyndhams, he having married Lady Grosvenor's elder daughter and Mr. Wyndham's step-daughter. I remember the years when he was Lord Mayor of Belfast, when I used to read with interest of the fine doings at Belfast Castle, because of the association. It seemed a fortunate chance that brought him so near.

Writing in the autumn I seem already to have got the prospective of the crowded summer. The packed weeks ran out with incredible swiftness. It was hardly Monday before Sunday was knocking at the door. But in the aggregate it seems as long as the three stagnant years that preceded it, for it is the life without happenings that slips away like a dream, having no landmarks or milestones.

The R.M. wrote as soon as we heard of his arrival, asking him to supper on the Sunday, and he came, and came pretty well all the Sundays of the early summer, and later with less regularity since other people claimed his society somewhat. He went all round the house examining things the first evening, and he must have found a good many things that were homelike, there being so many pictures and other things connected with Saighton Grange and Mr. Wyndham and Lady Grosvenor.

We had very jolly, musical evenings. Lord Shaftesbury has a beautiful voice and is a true artist. He sings Irish songs most beautifully of all, except, indeed, 'Annie

Laurie,' and his singing of that could not be bettered. With the parson at the piano he would sing 'Dusk of Autumn,' 'Must I be Bound While You go Free,' 'To an Isle in the Water'—all sorts of heavenly things with a perfection and an artistry that made for pure delight. The happy evenings used to end up with Gilbert and Sullivan, Lord Linlithgow kneeling on a cushion by the piano, being too tall to see the words if he stood upright—he is six foot four and a half—every one else roaring the choruses. It can be imagined what a pleasant world had come to our doors in the fourth year of our life in the West.

May was a most beautiful month, and I was able to sit out-of-doors at work as I always did during the English summers. I used to sit by the syringa-bush facing the stretch of meadow, for in the extraordinarily propitious weather meadow had come where there was usually only moss, so that our English visitors refused to believe that farming in the West of Ireland is the gigantic struggle between Man and Nature which it truly is.

I remember talking of these matters with Captain Pitt-Rivers, whom I had already met in the privately printed book about Julian and Billy Grenfell which Lady Desborough had allowed me to see. It was another odd coincidence that he should have come to our doors. He and Julian Grenfell were together in South Africa just before the War, and were both great horsemen, so that in the record of the racing, etc., sent home by Julian Grenfell to his mother, the name of Pitt-Rivers often occurred. Captain Pitt-Rivers lay on a rug on the grass—some one was always coming up the slope from the lake, or round the syringa-bushes from the green walk by the river, which was so convenient a way for the soldiers to arrive—and tried to take a rise out of me by saying the Irish were lazy, while I retaliated with some of my experiences at English farmhouse lodgings. The Staff had been highly diverted by the spectacle, seen from the windows of their hotel in Claremorris, of cattle,

sheep, pigs, and donkeys entering what they took to be the door of a house. They thought of the animals living with the family in a happy amity. It was really nothing like so bad as that. It was merely that there was a passage through the house—doubtless an over-arched passage and quite separate till some one had closed it by a door—to a little field behind. However, we did not grudge the gilded youth their simple delight, and in the case of Captain Pitt-Rivers his statements were made with a humorous design to draw me out.

Sometimes it was Lord Linlithgow who came through the green arches, objurgating the dogs with a pretended, fearful ferocity for their yapping. Or again a group of shy K.O.S.B.'s or the Artillery who always came with an assurance of welcome.

I remember one special Sunday evening when we had rather a large party to dinner. Captain Pitt-Rivers and a very nice couple, the Moirs—he, home from B.C. to see the War out, and a most charming, gentle, lovable person—with the general and the parson, added to our own party. While we were at dinner our dear ‘Parish,’ as the children call Father Michael, came in, but refused dinner, so sat in the dining-room joining in the conversation now and again with something quaint and kind and merry. I heard Lord Linlithgow say to Mrs. Pitt-Rivers afterwards how delightful it was to see and hear the Parish, his face beaming with fun and goodwill, twinkling into the talk. He spoke as though the occasion was one to be remembered long afterwards with tenderness and delight.

I remember the excessive annoyance of the Artillery when, having been away at Leenane shooting, they came back and a K.O.S.B. remarked on the doorsteps that Brookhill was K.O.S.B. preserve.

At first the Scotsmen used to sit round the drawing-room or on the tennis-court and wish they were back in Duddingston; to which some of the Artillery replied with a sigh for Cupar. We bore this for a time with what patience we might, till one day Pam stood on the

hearthrug, with a red spot in either cheek and very bright eyes, and ‘strafed’ their ill-manners. The Scotsmen could only gasp. In the midst of the strafing the door opened and there entered a young gunner on whom Pam swept round magnificently.

‘Mr. ——, are you English or Scotch?’

‘Three parts Scotch,’ he replied, with happy confidence.

‘Go,’ she said, and pointed to the door. ‘I have no use for you.’

After that we heard no more of Duddingston or Cupar. Indeed, as the summer advanced Dark Rosaleen began to weave her spells on the soldiers. It was a very good summer for the West of Ireland. Tennis and sitting-out to watch the tennis were possible day after day, and before the weather broke badly in September, the tennis-court was dry enough for playing on in the afternoon of a wet morning, for the water runs away through the limestone incredibly fast, so that you may have a drenching morning and dust blowing in the afternoon.

When the time came for the soldiers to go—they went steadily all through the summer—they always went with regret. The young officer whom Malachy had stuffed, who came in to sleep at Brookhill when the weather broke, he being rheumatic, imparted to me that he would like to stay at Claremorris ‘for the duration’ if he could find a little house for his wife. Things were said to us about Ireland and Irish kindness that undid some wounding things of the early days, unintentionally wounding, for, as Lord Linlithgow said one day, they would not have looked for Nationalism in a house like ours.

The distrust of the people for the soldiers, at least within any reasonable distance of the camp, had disappeared. Doubtless it still affected the lonely places. One lovely May day, when we had gone over to Foxford, where the R.M. had a court, and we were being most pleasantly entertained by the Sisters of Charity, who run

the famous Foxford tweeds industry and were then making ten thousand blankets a month for the British Army, a beautiful young girl from the mountains passed through the town, closely guarded by constabulary, on her way to the County Asylum, gone mad through fear of the soldiers and conscription. When I mentioned it to Lord Linlithgow that evening he growled : ‘Don’t rub it in !’ It *was* a tragedy that those kindly soldiers should cause terror and hostility among the people. Of course in such places as these where there is so much cousinship and so much solitude there is always a certain number of people, not quite sound mentally, whom a fear or a danger may push over, and a good many of these took the leap in those days.

But from many causes a kindly feeling grew up very quickly between the soldiers and the people. One realised how much alienation had been because of the absence of the soldiers. One day I came upon the humorous spectacle of a perfectly silent Royal Scot sitting back to back with a perfectly silent little farmer who had given him a lift in ‘th’ ass-cart.’ Both I imagine represented the most taciturn of all varieties of men.

That must have been about the time that the Corpus Christi Procession coincided with a big army ‘stunt.’ We walked into the town where

Devotion gives each house a branch,  
A bough,

to find the British Army sitting by the roadside, Lord Linlithgow himself standing just outside the town ; it was a furiously hot day. The military ‘stunt’ was held up till the procession was over : it took more than an hour to pass.

On our way we met a certain major who represented very fairly the old as opposed to the new army. The new army is quite another matter. At its best I don’t know that it can be excelled. On our remarking to the major : ‘Are you held up by the procession ?’ he

replied : ‘ If we wanted to go through it we ’d go.’ This blunt statement, which I learnt later did not at all represent the character of the man, made me very angry at the time. Indeed we had several ‘ passages’ with the major, not altogether friendly, about Irish affairs. We called him Cromwell since he claimed descent from the Protector, and his ideas as expressed were certainly Cromwellian, but he was a good sort, and a just man—is, I should say, as he is not in the past tense happily. The old army was always somewhat hide-bound. But our major, despite his Cromwellian utterances, is a fine soldier and a gentleman.

Pat said once to some ladies at Youghal who were abusing their country : ‘ If I was to go into an English or Scottish house and begin defaming the country, I should be asked to leave. Here it is a passport to social success.’

I had occasion to repeat this saying once or twice in the early days of the coming of the soldiers, but not afterwards, and in few instances. They used to assure me earnestly that I should never be asked to leave a Scottish house no matter what I said. Some of them seemed to have a natural affinity for Ireland, but one could excuse the K.O.S.B.’s for being touchy, knowing what the regiment means to the soldiers. Our difference of opinion was confined to the K.O.S.B.’s. It ceased after we had taken in a young officer from the wet camp in an influenza epidemic, and nursed him back to health. He was the last of three boys and he carried three wound stripes.

The odd thing was that we found the K.O.S.B.’s or some among them the gentlest of the gentle. It was weird sometimes to catch what they were saying to each other as they lay on rugs on the lawn watching the tennis ; sometimes a word or a phrase revealed the terrible things they had passed through ; but their eyes were without stain though their faces were oddly lined. By contrast the face of a boy of the same age who had not been out was like a baby’s.

I remember one very gentle boy, who had been smashed to pieces in a fall from an aeroplane, and was also the last of three brothers, explaining to us almost piteously about the Bachelor's Walk affair that Mrs. Duffy was a very old lady, and could not have lived much longer. We had forgotten even the name of the victim, but we thought the K.O.S.B.'s were always a bit overclouded, a bit on the defensive, because of Mrs. Duffy.

One of them told me one day that when the War broke out a battalion of the K.O.S.B.'s was hastily brought home from India. It will be remembered that the Bachelor's Walk affair happened about nine days before the declaration of war. The newly recalled battalion on its arrival in France was hailed by the English regiments with the greeting : 'Hello, Jock, who killed Mrs. Duffy?' They, never having heard of Bachelor's Walk or Mrs. Duffy, caught it up and repeated it to those who asked them the question and those who did not, thinking it great fun, till one day they met a battalion of the Dublins, in which regiment Mrs. Duffy's son was serving, and then there was a scrap.

The Scotsmen, I dare say, have pawky humour, but it was little in evidence. The only occasion on which I was aware of it was one day on the road when a mounted Tommy, riding at a breakneck pace, all but ran me down. A friend, who was cheering him on, said to me facetiously : 'Peter's on his way to the canteen and it's nigh closin' time.'

There was one K.O.S.B., indeed, who used to tell stories of a superior officer with an irresistible slow humour, but it was limited to that one subject, and although we grew quite attached to some of the K.O.S.B., I am bound to confess that to sit in the drawing-room of a wet Sunday with a dozen or so Scotsmen was a fearful experience.

Altogether I think it was a summer of reconciliation. We used to see a soldier now and again leaning over a stone wall having a chat with the small farmer, who,

with the assistance of all his family, was engaged in cropping. We heard that the soldiers sat down by many a cabin-fire and had hot cakes and milk and eggs with the peasants who thought the rationing very severe.

To study the soldier-man at close hand was a very interesting study. One discovered many things about him. After his loyalty to the Regiment comes his loyalty to the men—in the case of the officers. When the weather broke and the tents were flooded and the once green field was a morass, even those on the rack with rheumatism, lumbago, and sciatica, obstinately refused the offer of a bed. ‘We can’t leave the men,’ they would say. Another thing was their compassion for the dumb beast. They minded the weather less for themselves than for their horses. The spectacle of the horses, usually tired, overseas horses, as many of the men were tired, overseas men, under the drenching rain was a piteous one. The horse-lines were indeed dejected in those days, and it was dejection for any friend of the horses.

One rather pathetic story is that of the Colonel’s mare, a beautiful, young thing, fiery and gentle. The hardship in the mountain-glen, where the battery was rained upon almost without ceasing for a fortnight, broke her down. Peter Walsh gave her a stable, and comforted her with a good bed and good feeding : nevertheless she died. Peter’s tale was :

‘ Sure, I had great hopes of her, for she used to take the oats and she always seemed better after them. I think she’d ha’ lived if I could ha’ kept her quiet, but the noises of the camp were a great disturbance to her mind. When she’d hear the horses goin’ by she’d make an attempt to struggle to her feet an’ call to them ; and the noise of the band, an’ the bugles, an’ even the voice of the sergeants at the drill used to drive her distracted. Then one day whin I thought she was gettin’ better, the horses wint by at the trot across the bridge. She gev a great cry out of her, an’ then she

fell back on her haunches all sweatin' an' tremblin', an' she rowled over stone dead.'

The Major whom we called Cromwell told me once of a little Irish horse he had who was so affectionate and so fond of company that he used to walk up the walls of his box-stall to get after the groom, to whom he was much attached. 'When the groom had to be away,' said the Major, 'I had to have my tea in the box-stall; he was quite contented as long as I stayed, but he'd be over the wall if I went away.'

One day, as we were passing by the camp, we heard the queer, raucous shriek of a bird which we had been hearing for some days at intervals without being able to identify it. It revealed itself as a young jackdaw which a soldier was carefully putting into a tree. We stopped, and the R.M. asked if it had fallen from its nest. Oh no, it was a pet and lived in the tent with the men. When it wanted to get out it screamed, and when it wanted to get in again it screamed. One could imagine its sooty shape among the men. Lord Linlithgow had said one day: 'The men are never so happy as when they crowd in a tent on a wet day. They always break out into singing. They are warm and out of the rain and no work.' One can imagine the jackdaw presiding over those revels.

The soldiers were extremely fond of birds. There were several officers as fascinated by the study of birds as was Lord Linlithgow. They were usually the finest stuff. Flowers, too. There was an exceedingly tall officer, an inch in height above Lord Linlithgow, who always entered a room with his head bent as though he expected to strike the lintel of the door. He used to go about with flowers and grasses in his hand asking for their name and species. I believe the West of Ireland has a flora all its own.

Then there was the Poet, who boldly labelled himself so, saying to the astonished Major, when I was present at a concert in camp, 'I am a Poet and wish to be introduced to Mrs. Hinkson.' The Major was more

than astonished : he was scandalised : it seemed a breach of discipline : such things could not have happened in the Old Army. Nevertheless, out of sheer stupefaction he made the introduction, and the Poet came next day and sat beside me on the tennis-lawn and read his poems to me, quite oblivious of the surroundings. In an interval he went and captured a dragon-fly to show me the colours on its wings, and then gently restored it to its bush.

There was the musician, too, who was also an artist. His music was—is—most wonderful, for he does not read a note, but can play for a whole evening the great music of the world. I do not know his pictures, but some day I shall, and I know I shall find them beautiful. He loves poetry and the Celt : and he is gentleness of gentleness, with a slow, velvety voice and velvety eyes, and a tenderness for all things. One wonders why such as these should be caught into the bloody maelstrom where men kill and kill.

Yet somehow, with the knowledge of the gentleness, comes a conviction that war is pre-ordained and will continue. They have brought away nothing brutal or terrible from war. The boy, thrice wounded, with terrible things to tell if he would tell them, chatters about his bulldog and her delicious tricks. The Poet once gave me, in a phrase, a terrible picture of men coming out of battle. But the frenzy leaves the soul unhurt : the soul is asleep and the evil dreams pass with waking.

‘Half an hour after the worst battle,’ said Lord Linlithgow, ‘the soldiers are playing with the little French children.’

And one of the most touching things is the strange fatherliness of these boys of nineteen and twenty to their men.

After I had written so much I made a discovery about the boy we had nursed through influenza. He had been so shy and silent while under our roof that we thought of him as a little boy—he is not physically little at all.

After that he used to come in with a happy air of assurance, of being at home, which I loved to see in him. Of his griefs—and he had great griefs in the deaths in battle of his two brothers and especially the elder one, who had been a kind of father-brother to him, the parents being in India—he said as little as a boy says. Then one evening, when there were men present and there was man-talk of horses and racing, Eric came out unexpectedly. He talked, and talked well and with knowledge, and his voice was a good rich man's voice. Then came another evening when we sat round a glowing wood fire—it was after the weather had broken, and the soldiers used to come in from the camp to get warm—Eric suddenly drifted into talk of the war. Ypres—oh yes, he had been in Ypres in 1915. It was very gay then, though the shells were always coming over. Business was very brisk, theatres and cinemas open. Now and again there would be a scamper from the Market-Place into hiding, and a shell would burst. They seemed to know how to locate the Market-Place. One day a shell burst, blowing out one window of a little shop of two windows. As soon as the debris had settled down a little, the girl who looked after the shop picked up the boxes of sardines and bottles of olives which had survived the shell, and put them in the unharmed window.

‘When I went back in ’17,’ said Eric, ‘there was nothing but black flatness. Everything was levelled except here and there a jagged bit of wall standing up amid the desolation. The Cloth Hall—oh yes, it’s gone right enough—just a bit of crumbling wall about the height of this room. We climbed up to a church window and looked in. The carvings were splendid. There were life-size figures framing every window. Of course there was no glass, but we could see the pictures on the walls. The colours had all run and gone different. I tried to locate some places, but it was no use. The streets had disappeared.’

He stopped to laugh over the tale of a lady who thought that the position of a certain regiment must be

healthier since they were on a ridge. We asked if there was anything in the alarmist story of a returned soldier, that the Boche was preparing a desert for our troops to winter in. ‘Not a bit of it,’ he said. ‘They have wintered in the desert—nothing but shell-holes and black desolation for miles. We are occupying ground that has not been reduced to such desolation.

‘Lens and Armentières will be no good to us. Both are full of gas. In Armentières the civilian population lie dead in the cellars, where they took refuge when the Boche gas began coming over, knowing nothing of gas. No one could enter the place.

‘When we joined up in ’14 the French used to roar with laughter at the British little boy officers. Just imagine the French sous-officier, thirty-five years of age, with a great beard flowing over his chest, laughing till he cried at the little seventeen and eighteen year old boys from the Public Schools and Sandhurst. They are magnificent fighters, the French—very different in their ways from us. I’ve known them to get tired of the trench and go off to an estaminet for a drink. When they came back they would find the Boche in the trench. They would take it back and a bit more with it. We couldn’t understand the French tactics at first. When they began retreating, we used to think they’d never stop till they got to the sea. Then they’d begin coming back. . . . My word !

‘The French, for all they have the biggest account with the Boche, don’t nag at him, nor the Boche at them, as we nagged all day long. They don’t bother out of fighting time. One day some of our fellows went into the French line. There, right under their fire were the Boche playing about. “Do you see *him* ?” our fellows asked. “Oh yes, he comes over every day at this hour.” “Hadn’t you better train a machine-gun on him ?” They did.’

In the days when I thought Eric a little boy I should have liked to kiss his three wound-stripes if it were not too sentimental a thing to do, besides the likelihood of

its making Eric profoundly unhappy. An Irish soldier told me the other day that when he came out of hospital and entered a London 'bus, every one stood up at sight of his wound-stripes. One felt the pity of it, that through stupidity in handling the most martial-minded of people such a thing was little likely to occur in a Dublin tram.

Eric came to see us one day with his new acquisition, Mary, a chestnut mare. (I'm afraid her whole name was Little Mary. That is something I have never forgiven Sir James Barrie. Why not Little Lizzie or Little Jane or anything else you like, without profaning the holiest name on earth ?) Mary was an extremely restless lady, walking round and round while Eric held on to her bridle, his face against her face, she trying to kick any one or anything within reach. Eric loves even her sins. He accounts it a merit, a charm in her, that she will not allow herself to be saddled by a groom, but kicking and squealing kept Eric himself in the loose box for a quarter of an hour till suddenly she gave in, with an amazing sweetness. 'Like a child that refuses to put on its hat,' says Eric, 'and suddenly gives in.'

One rather trembles over the wounds when one hears of those encounters with Mary. One through the lungs, one through the neck and cheek, one through the arm.

Eric's companion when he brought us Mary to approve was the boy who fell from the aeroplane. He trained race-horses and rode them in civil life, and is a splendid horseman—with two broken legs and a foot reduced to pulp, to say nothing of the upper part of his body and face. 'His thighs are all right,' says Eric, 'but of course if he was thrown, it would be all over with him.' They are the dearest friends. 'Leonard is a splendid fellow,' says Eric with glowing eyes, and goes on to tell how, when they had released Leonard's shattered body from his machine, in the paved yard after the concreted house-top, he asked for a cigarette. 'He ought to be dead, of course,' says Eric, 'but after eighteen months in hospital he came back to us. He is making all the regiment horsemen. It is such a dis-

appointment to him that the officers' race at the Red Cross Meeting is off. He was so keen to ride.'

Eric speaks of himself and Leonard and a third one as 'we three crocks.' The third crock was wounded in the face terribly. I have only seen the side which is round and boyish. 'He won't go out again,' says Eric, 'because there's no gas-mask to fit him. That is why he got so terribly gassed in March, the mask was no protection.'

Wonderful, pitiful, heroic, great-hearted! Adjectives fail one thinking of these boys who are broken in the body, unbroken in the spirit.

Eric is a K.O.S.B. It was my turn to feel abashed when I having said carelessly that his new station would be near Dublin, he answered with a shade on his face: 'I do not want to go to Dublin.' A thousand pities that human beings, singly or in the mass, should so hurt and misjudge each other.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### THE END OF THE SUMMER

THERE was much talk during the summer which it is too soon to reproduce, even if one had kept it. Here is a story told by an army chaplain, who was with the troops at the first disastrous Battle of Gaza. He rode out to meet the casualties coming in, and they were bad enough. His eye was arrested by a man in a stretcher who did not seem to be wounded.

‘I haven’t seen you before,’ he said; ‘are you one of mine?’

‘I am, Father, God forgive me.’

‘I never saw you at confession?’

‘I haven’t been to confession for ten years.’

‘What’s the matter with you? Are you wounded?’

‘I haven’t got a scratch, Father, only the rifle took to shakin’ in my hand so I couldn’t get a grip on it. They seen I wasn’t shammin’, so they said, “We don’t know what the devil to do wid ye at all. You’re no use here. Better go back to the clearin’ station an’ see what they can do for you, for if ye stay here it’s shootin’ yerself or some one else ye’ll be.” Wid that I got in the stretcher an’ here I am.’

‘Would you like to go to confession now?’

‘I would, Father. I won’t deny it—it was the terror kem upon me wid me sins starin’ me in the face made me drop the rifle. The teeth chattered in me head whin I thought o’ what was before me.’

So Father P., riding beside the stretcher, heard the sinner’s confession. And no sooner was it over than the penitent leaped from the stretcher, seized his rifle, and :

'I'm as strong as a lion now,' he said, 'I'm goin' back!' And go back he did, and gave a very good account of himself.

One had many sidelights on the psychology of the soldiers. Some one said that he had seen a soldier sitting on the body of a dead German eating his dinner, because the ground was wet, and from no more barbarous motive. On the other hand, they had an extraordinary respect for graves. Anything like desecration was hardly to be thought of. If a soldier was impelled to pinch a very fine German helmet from a grave he did it guiltily and secretly.

Here is a story of a German submarine which I think has not got into the papers. Somewhere in the North Sea a U-boat suddenly bobbed up under the bows of a cruiser, and signalled that it desired to surrender. 'We know that game,' said the cruiser, 'we're going to blow you to bits in a minute.'

'Don't do that,' signalled the submarine, 'it's quite square. We want badly to surrender.' 'Send off your commander then in a boat.' 'We can't.' 'Very well, then. We'll blow you to bits.' 'Don't do it. We're in earnest.' 'Send off your officers then in a boat.' 'We can't.' 'Why not?' 'Come and see.'

After much parley the cruiser sent off a boat. In the cabin of the submarine they found the officers laid out neatly in a row with their throats cut. The crew had mutinied.

'The old Boche,' said Lord Linlithgow, 'surrenders hardly. One day my fellows brought in prisoners, the colonel of a crack Prussian regiment among them. I expressed a hope that he would be as comfortable as possible in the circumstances. He said he had not expected to find so much consideration. Some of the boys had been a bit rough with him. He was a very agreeable fellow. That night when he was left alone he ate his watch—pounded the glass and swallowed it and some of the wheels and things—to commit suicide, in fact.'

Very often on Sunday evenings the talk was political at the dinner table. Music filled up the evening. I have said that Lord Shaftesbury is a very good Irishman, with a natural affection for and understanding of the people. One would like to see him in a high administrative post in Ireland. He is a great friend of Sir Horace Plunkett, and through his work on the Congested Districts Board he is at home in Connaught, especially with the priests, who hold the key to the Irish heart.

One story he told us was of Belfast in one of the years of his Mayoralty, a year of big riots even in the history of Belfast. Things were looking very nasty indeed. The military and police were called out. A Belfast rioter has no respect for military or police beyond any other men. The men from 'the Island,' *i.e.* Harland and Wolff's shipbuilding yards—the same who chalked up 'To Hell with the Pope!' all over the ships' sides when the Convention went to visit Belfast—were armed with the missiles so deadly in a Belfast row, the sharp pieces of steel used in shipbuilding which cut like a sword. (To digress—it was said in Ireland at the time of the Titanic disaster that every sheet and plank of the vessel was scrawled over with 'To Hell with the Pope!' and worse, so that she was ill-fated.) Lord Shaftesbury, whom I take to be gifted with the most excellent common sense, took his courage in both hands. 'Withdraw both the military and the police,' he said, 'and I will be answerable for the safety of the city.' He had some difficulty in persuading them to do as he asked, but finally they agreed. He called together then the magistrates and others representing both sides. Joe Devlin was among the Catholics. There is a point where the Falls Road and the Shankill Road meet, each being the stronghold of the Catholic and the Orange sections respectively. The town was at fever-heat, each party seeking the blood of the other. 'You will keep the Falls Road back,' he said to one section, and to the other : 'And you will hold back the Shankill Road.'

It was agreed. A strong cordon was drawn across the exit from these historic thoroughfares, and the leading men of each section kept back their followers, who all the night through strained at the leash. With the morning the danger was over. The weary people went home to bed, their passions spent, and Belfast was safe till another Twelfth of July came round.

He had a high opinion of Carson as a leader, coupling his name with Parnell's. That, we old Parnellites, did not altogether accept, but we agreed that he was perhaps the only leader with a genius for leadership in our day. I have heard an advanced Nationalist say : ‘ Give us Carson for a leader and we ’ll fight the battle over again ! ’

One evening Lord Shaftesbury talked of the Ulster Covenant with a striking reminiscence.

‘ I sat in the Ulster Hall,’ he said, ‘ when ten thousand men stood up to repeat the words of the Covenant after Carson. It was an extraordinary sensation as I looked around me—I, alone, of all that multitude, seated. “ Repeat the words of the Covenant after me,” said Carson. “ I pledge myself to resist by every means in my power, under any circumstances, now and for ever any attempt to impose Home Rule upon Ireland.” How could any one take such a pledge ? “ Now and for ever—under any circumstances.” How could any one bind himself to remain unalterable under any circumstances ? ’

He was pessimistic about the future, saying that Ulster was very angry with the rest of Ireland and in a bad frame of mind for negotiation. One of us said : ‘ Ireland is very angry with Ulster.’

He said : ‘ Yes, that is so. Unless the rest of Ireland agreed to fall in with Ulster there is no possibility of peace between them.’ I said : ‘ You mean unless the Irish were to become Protestants.’ He said ‘ Yes : that is what it amounts to : and that, of course, will be never, so there will never be peace till one section or the other is driven out.’

Lord Linlithgow said one evening : ‘ If there had ever been a majority of the English people in favour of Home Rule Ireland would have had it long ago. Various political leaders brought their followers up to the Home Rule fence, but the English people have never been behind them.’

That was a shrewd observation, the truth of which one recognised.

He said one day before he left : ‘ I have not changed my opinions a bit, R.M.’—we were not so sure of that —‘ but one thing I have discovered. The Irish need a Catholic aristocracy.’

There he was wrong. The Irish aristocracy counts for little to the Irish people because in the main it is alien to them : perhaps because, like the French, only latent in the Irish, they have a capacity for genuine democracy. That is to say they would acclaim the aristocracy of beauty, brains, manners ; the accident of birth which gives the descendant of filibustering soldiers a coronet makes little genuine appeal to them. As for a Catholic aristocracy, they would be more critical of that if it was not with them. There is none so detested and resented in Ireland as the Catholic who is not with the people.

Only with these two was there any talk of politics. The soldiers had a simple way of counting all politicians as rascals, and so dismissing them from their thoughts.

The golden summer ran out all too soon. There were the mornings when one wakened to the sound of martial music and knew that a draft was going out to France ; and, constantly, this or that young flannelled figure disappeared from the group that gathered every afternoon on the tennis-lawn.

Some of those we liked best went. Some we only kept because of their sad immunity through their injuries. The officers’ wives, with whom we had made friends went—Mrs. Pitt-Rivers and Mrs. Moir, and a little dear, Mrs. Whigham, who was literary and had actually achieved publication in the *Morning Post*. And the boys;

there was MacBee—that was not exactly his name—the keen, handsome, grave, young soldier who talked like a father of those rascals, the band boys ; and there was Prior, for whom we had an affection because he seemed to typify young English, gentle boyhood, and was a little like our Pat.

With certain people I shall always associate the summer. There was Mrs. Pitt-Rivers who used to come up the long avenue cool as a lily, when the mists of heat were brooding over the land. She was an oddly exquisite and exotic figure in Claremorris. She was not only beautiful and very charming, but she was kind. I remember a day when we went to Clonbur, where the R.M. has a monthly court. It is an Irish-speaking district, so the proceedings of the court are usually racy out of the ordinary. The monthly court in such remote places is a sort of social event to which every one crowds. But it was ‘Syrian’ weather, and after we had dropped the R.M. at his court we went on to the Ferry, which lies just between Lough Mask and Lough Corrib. The Ferry sits in the lap of the mountains. It was one of the days of scintillating heat when the sand burns your eyes. Even motoring, the heat was intolerable. I keep an impression of Mrs. Pitt-Rivers, young, beautiful, and kind, her lily-like coolness as much undisturbed by the heat as one of the Madonna lilies which she resembled as closely as a woman can resemble a flower, leading me through the boulders and over the blinding sands, too dazzling for my purblind eyes, to the water’s edge. We lunched afterwards at a little house which might have stepped out of *Cranford*, with a garden which had many gardens contained within it—not a big garden, but a lovable, small garden, every inch of which carried a new delight, what with herb-garden and water-garden, kitchen and flower-garden, winding walks and shrubberies, such a garden as a woman will make for herself, somehow weaving her life and thoughts, her joy and her sweet-bitterness, into its mazes.

Again, there came Lady Shaftesbury, soft and warm

and kind, to give me assurance of what her mother, Lady Grosvenor, with whom I have long corresponded, but never met, must be like. She came and went, and on her second morning visit I was out for my morning walk, and so missed her : but I always keep an impression of something fair and good and gracious with an enveloping warmth, one of the most beautiful things of the beautiful summer.

Those days have already taken on the glamour which comes with distance.

Among the soldiers who came to us that summer was the Colonel of the West Kent Yeomanry, through whose delicious park at Southborough we walked in the Southborough days. When we were at our cottage on Southborough Common I had some little correspondence with him because of his manorial rights over the Common. How little I could have thought, when we admired his Alderneys, heard his peacocks scream and inspected the Boer pony he had brought home from South Africa, by favour of a friendly groom, that I should, in a few years' time, be receiving him as a guest in a house in the West of Ireland.

I wondered if he would take up the gage I had thrown down to Southborough the first day he came. I was pretty sure he would not, from all the pleasant things I had heard concerning him. But I said, as we shook hands : ‘Have you ever heard of me as Katharine Tynan ?’

‘I fancy I have,’ he said, and his eyes twinkled.

‘*Kent and Sussex Courier* ?’ I said. He laughed, and then I knew he knew.

The camp remained long enough to take away many of those we liked best. They were always going. It remained long enough to be half-drowned in September, when the tradition of the ‘Poor Man’s Harvest’ month failed, and after a lunar rainbow there came seventy-two hours of flooding rain, winding up with a thunder-storm and a deluge, only to begin again with heavy showers for the rest of the month. The camp was a slough, a

morass. It was hardest on the horses, though all possible was done for them. The men passed by the windows wretchedly drenched all day long, on their way to dry their clothes in the laundry, where a big fire had been built up ; yet they did not go sick. As one of the officers said : ‘If they would only go sick there would be relief in the breaking-up of the camp.’ Yet even then they did not want to leave Claremorris—not even the Cromwellian Major, whom we came to like more and more, who spent his last evening with us, with Eric, the boy we had come to love and to admire. It must have been that witch, Dark Rosaleen. Of course they had discovered the country joys for themselves, and how much better they were than cinemas.

After Lord Linlithgow left us we had another inmate of the house in a young officer of whose manners I once said : ‘No woman need ever think that he thinks of her as old, for he will not know she is old.’ Through his presence in the house, we, the exiles, the castaways of Connaught, came, as I used to write to my friends proudly, to have our war news twice daily by wireless and to set our watches and clocks by the Eiffel Tower.

So all that was plainly what we were waiting for during the three years in which we were cut off from a world at war.

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